

THE PREACHERS PLEA;

OR,

A Treatise in forme of a plaine Dialogue,
making knowne the worth and necessity of
that which we call Preaching, shewing also how a man
may profite by it, both for the informing of his iudge-
ment, and the reforming of his life.

Reviewed by the Author, and now the third time Imprinted.

I. COR. I. 21.

*Seeing the world by wisdom knew not God in the wisdom of God, it pleased God
by the foolishnesse of Preaching to save them that beleene.*



AT LONDON

Printed for SIMON WATERSON, and are
to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe
of the Crowne. 1613.

V u 3

TO THE HONEST AND WELL- DISPOSED READER.



It is the vsuall manner of the most which publish bookes, to dedicate the same to some honourable personage, or to some one of speciall place, partly to shew thankfulnessse for somereceined fauours, partly to procure credit and countenance to their writings, that vnder so good protection, they may the more boldly passe forth to the common viewe of all men. If I now varie from this generally receiued course, think not I pray thee (good Reader) that I do it in some humour, as if I either affected singularitie, or misliked the common custome: but know for a truth, that there are these two causes of my so doing: The first is, the obscurity of mine owne condition, wholiving herein a remote part, haue wanted either will, or opportunity, or both, to shrowd my selfe vnder the patronage of some great person: The second is, the nature of this present Treatise: for howsoeuer there be (and that not farre from the place of mine abode) some of good quality, vpon whose acceptance, I thinke, I might haue presumed; yet considering that which I haue framed, is but a homely and course discourse, meant chiefly for men of the plainest fashion, I thought I should breake the rules of comelinesse and correspondence, if I should aduance the inscription of my labour, to a person of higher degree, then of that meane and middle ranke, to the vse whereof, all that these following leaues containe, principally was intended. Therefore (friendly Reader) whosoever thou be, if thou be a true Nathaniel^a, a man of an honest and good heart, bee thy outward condition as it may be^b, though thou lye among the pots^c, or art behinde the ewes with yong^d, or howsoeuer else, euen as it were bound in outward misery^e, and of base esteeme in the eyes of men, yet thou art he whose patronage I affect, and in the hope of whose good allowance I take comfort. I know well, that hee which offereth any thing to the sight of the world, must make ready his backe for the long furrowes^f of e- uery byting censurer. It was truly said of him (though but a beathen,) that amongst men, nothing can scape without a nippe. But what then? If thy conscience shall giue this testimonie of mine endeauours, that thy heart is comforted thereby, in regard that thy iudgement is strengthened in so necessary a point, then let the most professed and sharp-toothed carper (say what hee please: nay though (as Iob speaketh) hee should write a booke against me, yet I would take it vpon my shoulder, and binde it as a crown vnto me). And as Dauid reckoned not of Michols taunts, in regard of the honor done vnto him by those religious maidens^h: so will I also set at nought the malicious taxings of all gain-sayers, if I shal approoue my selfe to thy conscience, in the sight of Godⁱ.

If thou now demanda of me, what it is which I do here offer vnto thee; know this brief- ly: It is a Treatise tending to the discovery of the worth and excellency of the word preached; teaching thee also, which art a continuall hearer, how thou maist by hearing edifie thy selfe in thy most holy faith^k; as well by establishing thy heart in the sound- nes of truth, that so thou maist not be caried about with diuers & strange doctrines^l; as by framing thy selfe to obey from the heart vnto the forme of doctrine, where- unto thou either art, or shalt be deliuered^m. This is the summe.

If thou demanda againe, what hath moued me to attempt this? I answer in as few words. There are two questions common in the mouthes of many, either ignorant or ill disposed persons, by which the beauty of Preaching is and hath beene much defaced in the eyes of many, not so well settled: the one is, What neede all this pseaching? the other is, Who knoweth who to beleue among these Preachers? These two de- maunds were first hatched in hell, but since being cherished by Anabaptisticall & Popish spirits, and by them buzzed into the heads of vnlearned, vnstableⁿ, & irreligious peo- ple, they are brought vnto a dinellish perfection. Somewhat I can say out of mine owne experience, that through a conceit that these two questions (as they are pressed by some wily workmen) are unanswerable, our Ministry is drawne into contempt, and the calling of a Preacher is deemed of all other professions the most superfluous, and such as may well be spared without any preiudice to the wel-being of Gods Church. The gining an-

^a Iohn 1. 47.

^b Luke 8. 15.

^c Psal. 68. 13.

^d Psal. 78. 71.

^e Psal. 107. 10.

^f Psal. 129. 3.

^h ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ

ⁱ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

^j ΚΛΕΑΡΧΟΥΣ

^k ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ

^l ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ

^m ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ

ⁿ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ

^o ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ

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The Preface.

swer to these bellish interrogatories, as it hath many times exercised me in the executio of my publike Ministry, so it hath at this time drawne me to the compiling of this present Treatise: both that those of these parts, who to my knowledge haue need, and do desire it also, may haue something by the, whereupon aduisedly to deliberate for the settling of their iudgments, and that others likewise el(ewhere, who (it may be) haue experience of the like Satanicall encounters, may (instead of a better help) enioy the benefit of this that I haue laboured in. This is the maine occasion, this is my chiefe intent in this tractate: wherein, as I haue freely vttered that which I am perswaded is the truth, so will I bee ready also either to alter or better my iudgment, if any man out of Gods Word shal offer to instruct me: hauing learned this lesson, to teach what I know without grudging, & to learn that wherein I am ignorant, without blushing. And though perhaps many know in this matter as much as I or any man can tell them, yet I am sure many are ignorant, and therefore I may well maintain my course with that saying of Augustine: It is better to giue him that hath, then to turne him away that hath not. It is meetter that they which know, should be wearied with many repetitions, then those which are unskilfull sent away empty for want of instruction. As for writers in our times, directly of this subiect I know none. If there be none, I wish there may be for as the saying is, One man is no man: and by the more this truth is anonched, the better it is confirmed. If there be that haue laboured in this very kind wherein I now do, yet it can be no prejudice to my endeavour. The ancient proverbe is, that one barke cannot beare all passengers: so neither can one author serue all men. Augustine held it as profitable, that of the same questions, many bookes should be made by sundry men in a differing stile, though not with a differing faith. All stomackes we see are not alike: One kinde of dressing pleaseth one, which hath no relish with another: and yet the same meate ordered after another fashion, may fit his appetite also. As there is a difference of stomackes, so of humours and dispositions in men. The same matter diuersly handled, may finde entertainment with diuers men: which yet digested after one only fashion, would haue acceptance but with few.

Touching the manner of writing, I will promise thee nothing more then ordinary: It is not for mee either to praise or discommenda mine owne workes: the one were vanity, the other folly. I submit all to thy iudgement. Onely this I say, somewhat to helpe my selfe: Hierome saith there are two things requisite for diuinity studies, Silence and Leisure. Of the lacke of both these I may well complaine. Household affaires, and the stirres occasioned by those busineses, cannot but breed distraction: and hee which is exercised with the care of a congregation, shall meet with very seildome intermission. I intreate thee therefore, when thou shalt finde me to faile in any thing (from which I account not my self priuiledged) impute it to this fore-named want: and hope thus of me, that if I had had more freedome and more time, all things should haue beene brought to better perfection.

I haue troden in an old beaten path, both by old and new Writers, by Diuines & Hea-then, namely, to frame my matter to the forme of a Dialogue, a very good way (in my seeming) to help the vnderstanding of common men: I confesse it to haue eased mee much in writing, I doubt not but it shall turne to thy benefit in reading also. Well, whatsoener it is (good Reader) thine it is: and being thine, I am commanded by him that may command vs all, not to withhold it from thee. Receiue it therefore with the same hand, with which it is deliuered to thee. Use it to thy comfort: and whatsoener good thou receiuest by it, let the glory be the Lords. All that I desire of thee by way of recompence, is that thou be a suter to God on my behalfe, that with his preuenting and following mercy in all needfull things which I know not, he would instruct me, in all truth which I doe know he would uphold me, and in those things, wherein, as a man I haue failed, he would reforme me. And the same God sanctifie vs both throughout, that our whole spirit, and soule, and body, may be kept blamelesse vnto the comming of our Lord Iesus Christ.

Farewell. (Modbury in Deuon.) 1. September, 1604.

Thine in the Lord,

SAM. HIERON.

Ad domum
apostolicam, p[er]uenerat
v[er]o d[omi]n[u]s d[omi]n[u]s
Ios. Basil. Epist.
I. ad Grog.
Naz.
August. de
bap. contra
Donat.
E[st] d[omi]n[u]s, d[omi]n[u]s
d[omi]n[u]s.

N[on] d[omi]n[u]s p[er] m[en]s
p[er] m[en]s d[omi]n[u]s
Diuerso stylo
non diuersa
fide: August.
de Trinit. lib.
1. cap. 3.

Semet ipsum
laudare vani,
vituperare,
stulti est. La-
ert. de Arist.
Hieronym ad
Marcellinam,

o Prou. 3. 27.
Vt prouenien-
te & subse-
quente mis-
ericordia, qua-
cunque scien-
da nescio do-
ceat me, in his
quae vera noui
custodiat me,
in quibus vt
homo fallor
corrigit me,
Fulgen. ad
Mon. lib. 1.
p. 1. Thess. 5. 23

THE PREACHERS PLEA.

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O R,

A TREATISE IN FORME OF A PLAINE DIA-

logue, making knowne the worth and necessity of that which wee call

Preaching: shewing also how a man may profit by it, both for the informing of his iudgement, and the reforming of his life.

Epaphras a Minister^a. Nymphas a priuate man^b.

^a Col. 4. 12.

^b Verse 15.

Nymphas.



Ir, vnlesse I do very much mistake, I haue often heard you in your publike Sermons urge the sufficiency that ought to be in a Minister, and especially for the clearing of doubts and cases of conscience among those, of whom the holy Ghost hath made him ouer-seer.

Epaphras. It is not vnlike, that among other points deliuered in the ordinary Ministry, you haue receiued this also: for I am well aduised, that of old it was the appointment of God, that *the Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and men should seeke it at his mouth^a.* So that we all, as many as tender the good of the Church of Christ, haue cause to bewaile our countries estate, in which are so many *Wells without water*, as S. Peter termeth them^b, and that not vnfitly: for as a Well placed by the way side, in regard of the outward seeming thereof, putteth the poore thirsty traoueller in hope of some refreshing: who repairing to it, and finding nothing but emptinesse, goes on his way with the greater discouragement: so these kinde of men standing in the Church of God, do by reason of their outward habite and semblance of grauity, make the wearied, distressed, and perplexed Christian conceiue, that if he haue recourse to them, he shall certainly be releued: but yet when he makes triall, he findeth them to his greater grieve, not vnlike to the images of the Heathen, *Which haue mouths and speake not^c, not hauing the tongue of the learned, that they should know how to minister a word in time to him that is weary^d.* But tell me neighbour, I pray you, this being graunted, what you would inferre hereupon?

^a Mal. 2. 7.

^b 2. Pet. 2. 17.

^c Psal. 115. 5.

^d I say 50. 4.

Nymphas. Surely, that which I would inferre hereupon, is this; that you being by your calling a Minister, are therefore able, and being also by the providence of God that Minister, upon whose labors I must especially depend^e, are willing also to enter discourse with me, and to affoord me your best helpe for my better understanding in some points, wherein I haue of late daies bene very much perplexed.

^e 1. Pet. 5. 2.

Epaph. For mine ability in this behalfe, what it ought to be I know, & what I wish it to be, I know also; yet whatsoeuer it is, I shall be most willing (as my duty is) to spend my time, to bestow my labour, & to employ my best endeaours in so holy a businesse, as is your building vp in knowledge, & your furtherance in the waies of godlines. And I do hartily wish, that both you, and others of our neighbours, would more often giue me the like occasion, I should then the better know your doubts, and so fit my selfe to speake in preaching to euery mans conscience, & you also should by that means be resolued in many things which for lack of conference must needs breed scruple, especially in those which haue not yet, through long custome, exercised wits to discerne both good & euill^f. This was the practise of the disciples: After that Christ had spoken in publike, when they had him alone, they asked him^g; yea our Sauour urged them hereto himselfe, enquiring of them after the end of his Sermons, whether they understood all that they had heard, to the end that if any doubt remained, it might be cleared to them. It is the probable opiniõ of some Diuines, that it was the ancient vse in the Synagogues of the Iewes, that when he which taught, had ended so much as hee had to say, any man might stand vp, and mooue a question for his further satisfying, in the things deliuered. Hence (as it is supposed) came that fact of Christs in the Gospel, of asking questions of the Doctors in the Temple^h; and it is likely the

The profit of conference betwixt the Minister and his people.

^f Hebr. 5. 14.

^g Mat. 4. 10.

^h Math. 15. 31.

ⁱ Luke 2. 46.

Apostle

Apostle had reference to that, permitting that liberty to all, saving vnto women, whose asking was appointed to be more private^k.

^k 1. Cor. 14. 34

Nymph. I am not a little glad to heare this from you: for to tell you the truth plainly without any flattery, I haue heard some complaine of a certain strangenes in you, and others of your coat, which they say hath discouraged them from aduenturing to conferre with you.

Epaph. That may be but a pretence, and yet I will not altogether excuse either others, or my selfe herein: haply we be not so tender ouer the wants of our people, as we ought to be. Howsoeuer, to preuent any such feare in you for this time, I pray you bee bolde to speake your minde freely, and you shall finde me far from seeming weary of you, or from giuing you any occasion to thinke that I am vnwilling to seeke to resolue you (as I may) in any thing that may trouble you. And I pray God, the God of all grace, euen for Christs sake, so to blesse this our conference, by giuing to vs both a right iudgement in all things, that it may be both to his glory, and to our further comfort.

Nymph. Amen. Well then, because I do euen long to acquaint you with that which hath (when I haue bin by my selfe) much disquieted me; you shall vnderstand, that the occasion mouing me at this time to craue your aduice, is this: since it pleased God to let the light of the glorious Gospel of his Sonne, by preaching, to shine in these parts more cleere-ly then in former yeares, it hath happened that I haue fallen into the company, sometime of common men, (sometime of men of better fashion, which in the world we call wise men; sometime also of men of learning, and by profession, Ministers: some of whom to my grieve I haue heard speake very disgracefully, some very scornefully, all of them much to the lessening of that reuerent estimation which we ought to haue of the preaching of the word, and of the ordinary course thereof, which is amongst vs.

The occasion
of the whole
Dialogue.

Resistance
doth euer ac-
company the
preaching of
the truth.

^l Luke 10. 18.

^m 2. Tim. 3. 8.

ⁿ Iude 14, 15.

^o 2. Pet. 2. 5.

^p Math. 24. 39.

^q Exod. 2. 14.

^r Exod. 5. 20.

^s 2. Tim. 3. 8.

So Clay-
stone vpon
the place.

^t Numb 16. 1.

^u 1. Cor. 12. 3. 10.

^x Acts 2. 13.

^y Acts 4. 2.

^z Verse 18.

Epaph. It is not vnlike, neither yet indeed is it to be maruelled at, as though some strange thing were come vnto vs. The diuell knowes by long experience that the preaching of the word is the ruine of his kingdom, and that thereby he is made like lightening to fall downe from heauen^l. And therefore it hath euer bin his practise, at the very first entrance of sincere preaching, to raise vp some men of corrupt mindes, to resist the truth^m, and to stop the happy proceedings of the Gospel. The first Preacher mentioned in the Scripture, is Enoch the seauenth from Adam, together with the relation of whose doctrine, the text mentioneth also the cruell speakings, & violent courses of wicked sinners against himⁿ. The next after him was Noah, which was a Preacher of righteousness: and howsoeuer the story mentioneth expressly no tumults raised vp against him, yet it may easily be gathered, in that he preaching so many yeares before the comming of the flood, yet all that while we do not finde any one to haue bin reclaimed, but they all continued in their accustomed security, & knew nothing till the flood came and tooke them all away^p. Passe from him to Moses, of whose resistance the story relateth many particulars: at his first vndertaking any authority among the people, in seeking to end a strife betwixt them, hee was taken vp short with the common speech, *Who made thee a man of authority, & a Iudge ouer vs*? After, when he was sent backe into Egypt to deliuer the people from the bondage of Pharaoh, the story is a witnes how often & openly he was gain-said, sometimes by the people, they murmuring at him^r; sometimes by Iannes & Iambres, two Egyprians, sometimes by Korah & his complices^s: so that though the Lord wrought mightily by Moses, yet he had daily experience of the malice of the wicked against the truth. Now for the times of the Prophets, one Jeremy may be a sufficient witnes: he saith he heard the railing of many, and the word of the Lord which hee preached, was a reproach vnto him, & in derisio daily^u. If you examine the times after Christ, at the first spreading of the Gospel, this will be more apparent. Run through the booke of the Acts: the preaching of Peter & Iohn was entertained first with mocking^x: afterwards more open violence was vsed, & the men in authority tooke it grieuously that they taught the people^y, & by common consent put them to silence^z. Steuen was a man full of faith, & of the holy Ghost, and they were not able to resist the wisdom

wisdomes and the Spirit by which he spake, yet certaine arose euen of the Synagogue, and moued the people against him^a. Paul was mightily withstood, sometimes by *Elimas* the sorcerer^b, sometimes by the Iewes^c, sometimes by *Demetrius*, & those of that faction^d, sometime by *Phygellus* & *Hermogenes*^e, otherwhiles by *Hymeneus* & *Philetus*^f. Thus we haue euen a cloud of witnesses to confirme this, that it hath euer bin the diuels course by all means to withstand the preaching of the truth. And therefore maruell not, good neighbor, at it, when you see the like in these times: these are Satans old pranks, and he will thus bestirre himselfe to the end.

Nymph. Blessed bee God, you haue well satisfied mee in this: so that I now see that those which loue the truth, haue cause to reioyce at it, rather then to bee dismayed when they shall see the outrage of the world, and the fury of carnall men against the publishing of the Gospell.

Epaph. You are not deceived: for the diuell his struggling on this wise, sheweth that there is a stronger then he come, to binde him, and to take his armor from him^g. And though the oppositions of men are at the first assault something troublesome, yet we haue euer cause to reioyce, when we can say iustly, *After this manner did they to the Prophets*^h.

Nymph. Yet sir, by your leave, I cannot but maruell, that seeing the preaching of the Word is so excellent a thing as it is, euen the power of God vnto saluationⁱ, men should notwithstanding so eagerly resist it, & shew themselves so great enemies vnto it.

Epaph. You wil cease to wonder, whē you shal truly vnderstand the causes mouing worldly & vnregenerate men to malice and maligne that, which indeed as you say, if the worth thereof were knowne, they ought rather with all reuerence to embrace: and if you thinke that it may be helpfull vnto you in that, wherein you desire to be resoluēd, I wil open the same vnto you something more at large.

Nymph. You cannot content me better, then if you shall undertake to discourse thereof: for (as I suppose) when I haue once learned the true cause why preaching is so much mistaked, I shall the lesse feare the pretenced reasons, which I daily heare to bee alledged against it.

Epaph. The true causes why the course of preaching, when it is performed so as it ought, is so much repined at, are these three especially. The first is this: As men loue nothing more thē their sins, so they loathe nothing more thē the discovery thereof: they can by no meanes endure to haue their secret corruptions ript vp: it is a death vnto them to be thoroughly & directly dealt withall. Wicked *Ahab* hated the sincere Prophet of the Lord *Michaiab*, because hee neuer prophesied good vnto him but euill^k; that is, he neuer spared him, but deliuered the truth of God vnto him plainly without flatterie. Now the preaching of the word, it is as the prouerb is, The finger in the bile; it is euer rubbing vpon the gall: and being light, it maketh all things manifest^l, & discloseth euery mans close and secret vngodlinesse. In the daies of blindness (that is, in times and places where there is not a setled course of preaching) many a man seemeth to himselfe, and to others also to be vnreproueable, who when the light of the word by powerfull application breaketh out, is discovered both to others, & especially to his owne conscience, to be nothing lesse then that which he was supposed to be. Here is then one cause of dislike: the word thus handled, openeth that which men of al other things desire most to be cōcealed: so that it is true of the word of Christ, which he witnesseth of himselfe, *The world hateth me, because I testifie thereof that the workes of it are euill*^m, Tell mee now I pray you, what think you of this?

Nymph. Truly I cannot but beare witnesse to the truth hereof out of mine owne experience. For howsoeuer, I haue now learned, I thanke God, to say with *Dauid*: Let the righteous smite mee, for that is a benefite; let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious oyle that shall not breake my head: yet I well remember, when I first heard preaching, I was many times discontented: me thought the Preacher was too peremptorie, and a great deale more plaine then needed: yea I had much ado at times, not to perswade

^a Act. 6. 5. 9.

10. 12.

^b Act. 13. 8.

^c Act. 14. 19.

^d Act. 19. 24.

^e 2. Tim. 1. 15.

^f and 2. 17.

^g Luk. 11. 22.

^h Luk. 6. 23.

ⁱ Rom. 1. 16.

The causes of the dislike of preaching. The first cause.

^k 1 King. 22. 8.

Vnguis in vlcere.

^l Eph. 5. 13.

^m Ioh. 7. 7.

Psal. 141. 5.

perswade my selfe that I was chiefly aimed at in some things, and that the Preacher had receiued some secret informations touching me & my demeanour, which he there opened in the pulpit. So hard a thing is it for flesh and blood to beare the words of reproofe, yea though in the witnes of a mans own conscience he hath euery way deserved the same: But I hartily beseech God on the behalfe of you, and others of your sort, that he would enlarge your spirits, and giue vtterance vnto you, that you may open your mouths boldly, to publish the secret of the Gospelⁿ. For I thinke there were neuer any daies of greater security, in which it is needfull that the men of God should lift vp their voice like a trumpet, to shew the people their transgressiōs, & the house of Iacob their sinnes^o: Because indeed, as it was said of old; All the world sitteth still, and is at rest^p. And I wisō vnfaignedly, that the seuerall watchmen in their particular charges, would remember that uem which the Spirit of God giueth by the Prophet; Yet that are mindfull of the Lord, keep not silence^q. But sir I am afraid I do too much interrupt you, therefore I pray you proceed to shew the next reason of dislike.

Epaph. You haue said the very truth. We can be content to beare the word vntill it risse vs. But as a purging potion, so long as it is in drinking, is but as o-ther drinke vntill it worke, & then we could be content to cast it vp againe: so we can quietly beare the word vntill it worke vpon vs, but then it seemeth a burden vnto vs. But to come to the opening of the second reason of the dislike of preaching: I haue by obseruation found it to be this; because preaching is (as men suppose) an enemy vnto liberty, a thing which by nature euery man desires to enioy. In the second Psalm we read what is the opinion that men haue of Christian obedience, they call it *bands and cords*^r, that is to say, meere seruitude & slavery, a base & ignominious thing to be conformable. This is the very conceit which worldlings haue of yeelding themselves vnto the doctrine of Christ Iesus. When *Lot* admonished the Sodomites, and to began to perswade with them to desist from violence against the strangers that were with him in his house: they cried strait, *Shall he iudge and rule*^s? Forthwith they began to repine against his godly aduice, as against a matter of too much tyranny in *Lot*, and of too great subiection in themselves. It was the imputation of *Korah* & his adherents to *Moses* and *Aaron*; *You take too much vpon you*^t: they deemed the gouernment of *Moses* too peremptory, as an enemy to their liberty, and therefore not to be endured. When the Prophet *Amos* preached, it was said, that the *land was not able to beare his words*^u: as who should say, his Sermons were too censorious: men that were of a liberall and free disposition, were not able to digest them. One reason which the Iewes had against Christ, to stirre vp themselves to finde a meanes to suppress him, was, because they supposed that if they let him alone, *The Romanes would come and take away both their place and nation*^x. They thought bondage would follow vpon his doctrine. This might easily bee enlarged with the addition of many examples: but our owne experience may be a sufficient confirmation. For euē at this day the world maintaineth the same opinion of obedience and conformity in Christian duties, that it is an abridgement to liberty, that it saoureth of flauishnesse and basenesse for a man at the words of a Preacher to be restrained.

Nymph. Truly sir it is euē so: for out of my poore experience, I am able to witnes thus much, that many men imagine, that for them to liue without controlment, following the swaie of their owne affections, if they may sweare and blaspheme, and be vicious and riotous, and drunke with the drunkard, and prophane the Sabbath, and scoffe at zeale and sincerity in religion, and runne into all manner of excesse, this is liberty. On the other side, they repute the restraint from any of these things, to be the greatest thraldome; a misery it is to be kept within compasse; that a man may not sweare, may not spend the Lords day in sports, or in worldly businesse, or in trauelling vpon his owne occasions, that he must set such a narrow watch before his mouth, as that there should be no filthinesse, nor foolish talking, nor iesting: that hee should bee tied to the continuall hearing

ⁿ Eph. 6. 19.

^o Isa. 58. 1.

^p Zach. 1. 11.

^q Isa. 62. 6.

The second
cause of the
dislike of
preaching.

^r Psal. 2. 3.

^s Gen. 19. 9.

^t Numb. 16. 3.

^u Amos 7. 10.

^x Ioh. 11. 40.

hearing of the word, to often receiving the Sacrament, and the like, this is a misery of all miseries, a thing not to be endured: they cry when you tell the these things. This is a hard saying, who can abide it? and determine as those of whom you spake, Let vs break their bands, and cast their cords from vs. But resolve me herein I pray ye Sir, is this liberty? Are not men herein altogether mistaken?

^a Iohn 6. 16.

Epaph. Yes verily: for howsoever men thinke themselves iolly fellows, because they can seeme to contemne all gouernment, yet indeed of all conditions it is the basest, and of all thraldomes the most slavish for a man to be subiect vnto sin, to be giuen ouer to his owne lusts, to be led wholly by the corrupt affections of his owne heart: and to say the truth, euen in reason it must needs be so: for, as to be a slave and a vassall is in it selfe very opprobrious, and such a thing as euen the nature of man doth abhorre; so, the more vile he is to whom a man is in bondage, the more base and odious is it in the eyes of others, and the more tedious to himselfe, if he bee of any ingenuous disposition. Now what more vile thing can there be imagined then sin is? What more abominable before God, what more dangerous to the soule of him that committeth it? So that sinne being a thing so vile, in how seruile an estate is he, that is a slave and a vassall thereunto? Do you conceiue me in this?

Nymph. I conceiue you well. But yet this breeds a further doubt: wee may all complaine with the Apostle, that we are euen captiue vnto the law of sinne: who then is hee that may be called a slave of sin?

^a Rom. 7. 23.

Epaph. Our Sauour shal make you answer: He that committeth sin, is the seruant of sin: to which, to make it more plaine, you may adde the saying of the Apostle, Know ye not, that to whomsoever you giue your selues as Seruants to obey, his Seruants you are to whom you obey? The latter place is an exposition to the other. He (saith Christ) that committeth sin, is the seruant of sin: he committeth sin, (saith Paul) that obeyeth sin: now he is said to obey sin, who finding his corrupt heart to prouoke him to any thing, sets himselfe presently to perform the same, or as the holy Ghost speaketh, taketh thought for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof, His eye waiteth for the twilight, and he seeketh opportunities for his filthinesse. So the Adulterer is a slave to his sinne, because he is wholly at the command thereof, studying how to compass the same, and to satisfie his vncleane desires to the vttermost. The Drunkard is a vassall to his sin, because it is as it were his businesse, to set himselfe to the committing of it, to get money to bestow vpon it, to gather company that he may haue fellows in it, to rise early to follow it, to make his body able to beare it. The conetous person is a drudge to his money: for, for it he will do any thing, he will defeat one, and defraud another, and oppresse a third, and grinde the fourth, and take vsury of the fift, and rake and wring, and extort, and lie and forswear, and whatsoeuer else for his mony. He is such a Seruant to it, as the Centurions Seruants were to him: If money say to him, Go, he trudgeth by and by: if it say Come, it hath him at a becke: if it bid him do this, be it neuer so vile, vniust or vnlawfull, eftsoues he doth it. In like manner the continuall Gamster, is as it were in the state of villenage to his humor, he will neglect all other occasions, either of rest for his bodie, or of profit for his outward estate, or of religion for his soules good, to fulfill it: for his life (if company be for him) he is not able to forbear it. In like sort, the ignorant man is in bondage to his blindnesse, for bring all the perswasions you can against it out of the word of God, yet ignorance shal still haue the vpper hand, either he will not conceiue you, or he will not beleue you, or hee will not be directed by you. So againe, the superstitious is in thraldome to his owne peeuishnesse, for let God commaund what hee will, or prescribe what forme of worship he thinketh good, yet, thus and thus it hath been so long, and so it shall be, and so will I doe for ever. The word that thou hast spoken vnto vs in the name of the Lord, we will not heare of thee; said the superstitious vnto Ieremie, But we will do whatsoeuer thing goeth out of our owne mouth, as wee haue done, both we and

^a Iohn 8. 34.

^b Rom. 6. 16.

^c Rom. 13. 14.
^d Iob. 24. 15.

^e I say 5. 11.
^f Verse 22.
^g Isa. 33. 15.

^h Math. 8. 9.

¹ Jer. 44. 16. 17 *our Fathers* ¹. In a word, whosoever suffereth himselfe to be led by the corruption of his owne heart in any thing, without making resistance, without desiring the assistance of Gods Spirit to withstand it, whether it be pride, malice, reuenge, or whatsoever else, the same is a Slave to his sinne, a drudge to his own humour, and the basest Creature vnder heauen. Nay he is more slavish by degrees, then those slaues, whom they vsed in old times (and as they doe still in some Countries) to buy with money, and to vse at their pleasure. For there is no such slave, but he keepeth a free mind in a seruaile estate: but men generallie, being in this most filthy and wretched thraldome, thinke themselues to bee in the most happie estate that may bee, and haue no will nor disposition to bee freed, but are enemies to the meanes of their deliuerie. Thus haue I shewed you, that though men thinke themselues at liberty when they may liue licentiouslie, yet they are much deceiued: it may be said of them as *Noah* saide of Canaan: Seruants of Seruants they be^k, doing the businesse of the Deuill, not grudgingly or vnwillingly as bond- slaues vsuallie doe, but readily, greedily, and ioyfully.

^{*} Gal. 5. 13. *Nymph.* I am (I thanke you) well satisfied for this: yet by the way giue me leaue to demaund of you one thing: Doth not Paul say to Christians Brethren ye haue beene called into liberty²? so that it seemeth there is liberty euen in Christianity, which what it is (if any such be) I pray you to instruct me.

The Liberty of Christianity *Epaph.* Certainly the state and calling of a true Christian, is a louely calling, a calling that calleth men vnto it, such a calling as that the beames thereof are able to raiue the eye. True it is, that euer since *Adam* did eate the forbidden fruite, all the mouthes of his posterity are so out of taste, that wee can neither heare nor see, nor taste any thing that good is; so that if wee looke vpon the estate of a Christian living in obedience, with an eye of flesh, it looketh euen like *Christ* for all the world, euen as a withered braunch, and like a roote in the drie ground; when we see it, there is no forme that we should desire it¹. The eye of a naturall man can see no good in it, vnlesse it be good to cleaue vnto the Lord, or it is good to be afflicted^m, or it is good to run the way of Gods commandements, and such like, which are like pills, and to dye for it, will not down with a carnall man; yet if it bee duely considered, it is the onely estate of libertie. It is not a fleshly liberty, a libertie for men to doe and speake, and liue as they themselues please, every man after his owne fashion, as though the reines should be laid on euerie mans necke, and he left to his owne disposition. It is no such liberty, for then the more Libertine the better Christian, and then all the world would soone bee religious, for all the World are wel-neere Libertines. But this libertie which Christians haue, is a spiritual libertie, a heauenly liberty, a libertie of the soule; not which giueth the body liberty from obedience, but which setteth the Soule at libertie from destruction: not which maketh vs free to sinne, but which setteth vs free to serue God: not which giueth a man leaue to liue as caring for none, but which maketh him by loue a Seruant vnto all^o: a freedom it is from the bondage of *Sathan*, from the thraldome of sinne, from the curse of Gods Law, giuing an interest into Gods fauour, into the merits of *Christ*, into the felicity of the chosen, into the eternall inheritance of Gods kingdome. This is the liberty of Christians, of which howsoever worldly men (which fauour onely of earthly things) may iudge, yet such it is and so great, and hath so many priuiledges annexed thereunto, as that all the enfranchisements and freedoms of this world are not worthy therewith to be compared. For as the new *Ierusalem*, which is from aboue, is of all other Citties and Incorporations, the most glorious, so it is the greatest priuiledge that any man can attaine, to be, of a stranger and a forreiner, admitted to be a Cittizen, and free-denizen of that society^p. Thus at your request I haue giuen you a taste of the doctrine of Christian Liberty: the obedient Christian is the true free-man, euen the Lords free-man.

Nymph.

Nymph. Doubtlesse this is a most excellent point, and to the soule of a Christian exceeding comfortable: how much therefore are we bound to giue thanks to our heavenly Father, who hath deliuered vs from the power of darknesse, and hath translated vs into the kingdome of his deare Sonne? And I beseech God giue vs the grace, that being thus made free from sin, we may become the seruants of righteousness: that so hauing our fruit in holinesse, the end may be euerlasting life. But now if it please you, I long to heare the third cause of the small regard of Preaching.

Col. 1. 12, 13.
Rom. 6. 18.
Verse 22.

Epaph. The third cause of contemptuous resistance, is the iudging of that which is taught by the outward semblance of the teacher: as for example: Some great man in the World, that happely is a Magistrate, or a man of note and speciall reckoning in the place where he liueth, comming to the Church, and hearing his sinne reprooued, and such and such duties perswaded, strait hee casteth his eye vpon the person of the speaker, and him he seeth to be but some ordinarie man, one that if he should come in place where he is, should be serued as the poore man in the torne coate, of whom Saint Iames speaketh, that should be bidden to stand there aloofe off, or sit heere at my foote-stoole; eftsone, he beginneth to thinke with himselfe, that it would be a shame for him, to suffer the wordes of such a one so farre below him in the world, to cary so great authority with him, as that he should by and by conforme himselfe to his perswasions. Another perhaps, that hath had some good education, & thereby hath gotten some taste of learning, or is otherwise by obseruation and experience, grown to be a man of some reach and capacity: he, when he compareth himselfe with the teacher, seemeth to see as much (if not more) learning, iudgment, reading, and vnderstanding in himselfe as in him: and therefore he saith with himselfe, Why should I yeeld to his instruction? Why should his opinion sway so farre with me, as to draw me from mine owne courses? why should not I be as well able to iudge what is meere as he? A third, that is (it may be) some Gallant, a man of spirit, that thinketh it a part of his courage to be without feare euen of God himselfe, he hearing at a Sermon threatnings denounced against sinne, and against those very sinnes whereof his life is a continuall practise, in the greatnesse of his stomack, and in the prophanenesse of his hart, beginneth to set all at nought, imagining that it cannot stand with that hardinesse and vndaunted resolution which he professeth, to bee stricken with the wordes of a silly man, or to haue his heart terrified with a few idle speeches. In a word, the people generally doe not consider how well a thing is spoken, how sufficiently prooued, how soundly seconded, and made good by the word, this neuer entrencheth into their thought: but they see, that he which preacheth, what is he but a man of their owne sort, one neither armed with authority to punish them, nor endued with power to constraîne them, neither yet furnished with wealth to contend with them: and that all his force lyeth in his tongue, the exercise whereof when it is once ouerpast, there is all that hee can doe, and therefore they make a Tush at his doctrine, and say of the Preacher as they did of old, *Hee is but winde*, and what is he that he should commaund vs? Thus, this also is one cause of resistance to the holy doctrine taught, men

The third cause of the dislike of preaching.

Iames 1.

1st. 5. 13.

Nymphas. This discourse of yours, so fully discovering the proud conceites of an unreformed heart, calleth to my minde the commendation which Paul giueth of the Thessalonians. When ye receiued of vs (saith he) the word of the preaching of God, ye receiued it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the word of God: for so long as men haue no higher a conceipt of that which they heare, then that it is but a mans doctrine, the respect vnto it cannot choose but be verie small; so that I must needs yeeld vnto you in this, that this also may well goe among the number of the causes why preaching is of so slender estimation here amongst vs. Yet Sir, men that are enemies

1 Thes. 2. 13.

in this case, do pretend other reasons, and will not be knowne of any of these to be the occasion or cause of their dislike.

Epaphras. That is most true; for sinne doth euer seeke shades, and it is a trick which we haue learned of our Grandfather *Adam*, to sew figge-leaues together to couer our nakednesse ^y. For shame men wil not say that they are hereby moued to dislike: yet notwithstanding these be the true grounds, and men in their consciences know it to be so. If a man had asked of *Pasbur* why he smote ^z *Ieremie* the Prophet, and put him in the stockes ^z, no doubt but he would tell you a very formall tale, as that, *He prophesied against the citty* ^a: he hath not sought the wealth of the people, but the hurt: and that he discouraged the bandes of the men of warre, in speaking such wordes vnto them ^b. This would bee *Pasbur*s pretence, thus he would plead for his strait courses against the poore Prophet, yet this is but a colour: for the very matter is, *Ieremie* was a little too bold, he spake too plaine, his Sermons were like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone ^c; he kept not a word backe of all that the Lord commaunded him.

^y Gene. 3. 7.

^z Iere. 26. 2.

^a Chap. 26. 11.

^b Chap. 38. 4.

^c Iere. 23. 29.

Nymphas. Indeepe I haue heard much spoken by many, and diuers exceptions made against preaching, but I neuer heard any man acknowledge his dislike to proceede from any of these causes which you haue named: I wish therefore that you would instruct me how to stop the mouths of Gaine-sayers, when I light into the company of such. They will not perhaps say much to your faces that are Preachers, but such as I am shall often heare them talke at liberty, and utter the very bottome of their stomacks, and spend all their powder and shot to the beating downe of that which I hope they shall neuer bee able to ouerthrow.

^d 2 Kin. 6. 16.

^e Iere. 1. 19.

Epaph. Allure your selfe of that: for we may be bold to say in the comfort of a good conscience, *They that be with vs, are more then they that be with them* ^d. And when we come on the same errand with *Ieremie*, why may we not hope vpon the same promise, *They shall fight against thee, but they shall not preuaile against thee, for I am with thee to deliuer thee, saith the Lord* ^e? yet notwithstanding, lest their conceits should bee any hinderance to those that are well affected, or it should be an encouragement to them in their euill; when they find those that seeme contrary minded vnable to answer them, therefore I do both commend your care herein, and will be as helpfull to you as I am able, in opening the vanitie of their seuerall exceptions, that are enemies vnto preaching.

^f Luke 22. 32.

Nymph. I thanke you for it: and I trust that he which commaunded *Peter* when he was himselfe conuerted, to strengthen the brethren ^f, will both blesse your care to my profit, and render to you seauenfold into your bosome, the comfort that I shall receiue by your aduice. I will be bold therefore, as farre as I can call to mind, to make knowne vnto you euery thing that I haue heard objected in this case.

Epaph. Be so, I pray you, and faile not till you be fully satisfied, to vrge euery thing to the vttermost.

The seuerall
exceptions against
preaching
^g Hebr. 12. 16.

Nymph. You know Sir, that wee haue in our Country, men of diuers humors, and sundry fashions, some grossely ignorant, and meere sortish, chiefly in matters of Religion; some prophane, such as *Esau* was ^g, who care more for a portion of meate, esteeme more of a worldlie commoditie, then of a heauenlie treasure; some wise and sensible, as the world calleth wisdom; some learned also, and Schollers by profession: now it hath bene my hap at some one time or other, to fall into conference with euery of these sortes, and as communication draweth in one thing after another, so to finde out their seuerall opinions: and though some of them be verie simple, and to be called idle surmises rather then grounded reasons, yet because you haue made me so kind an offer, you shall therefore haue all.

The ignorant
peoples ex-
ceptions against
preaching,

Epaph. Be it so, I am well contented: and because Ignorance is a mother sin, therefore let vs first heare I pray you the ignorant mans exceptions.

Nymph. One thing that I haue heard some ignorant men with vs alledge, is, that they can see no reason why there should be more vse of preaching now, then there hath

bath bin in former times. They haue liued (they say) some thirty, some forty, some more yeares, without a settled ministry, hauing onelie (vnlesse it were now or then at times) the ordinary seruice read among them; and all this while they felt no want of that which is now called teaching, and therefore they are minded not to esteeme that much, for the remainder of their life, without which they haue liued and done well enough hitherto. How like you this Sir? Is not this a profound reason? Is not heere good Dismissie?

Epaph. Indeepe you may well call this the ignorant mans reason, it is so grosse, hauing in it but three errors, which you know is nothing to speake of in so short an allegation. First of all, they will neglect preaching now, because they haue liued without it hitherto: as though it were wisdom for a man in his old or middle age, to refuse a kindnesse offered, because in his youth or childhood he had no means to enioy it. Had it beene a good reason for *Paul*, when Christ called him from Heauen, to haue said, O Sir, it is now too late, I am a man that haue spent the best part of my time, without the knowledge of thee and of thy Religion, and therefore I pray thee trouble mee not now; I hope to shift out as well for so much of my life as is behind, as I haue done to this day. No man will be so without common sense, as to say, that *Paul* might iustly haue refused vpon such a pretence: & yet it had bin as good a reason as theirs. Secondly, they erre in this, in that they account the time of their ignorance to haue bin without danger, because they neuer saw the danger. Alas, little do they consider the extreame misery of those times. Christ saith, that *hee that walketh in the darke*, namely without the bright shining light of Gods holy word, *knowes not whither he goeth*^h: he is euen in the vally of the shadow of death, a stranger from the life of God, walking after the course of this world; and after the Prince that ruleth in the ayre, euen the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience^k. A man that hath beene in a swoond, and is awaked out of it by the paines of his friends, he will tell you how pleasing the slumber thereof seemed to his senses, and at the first beginning to bee awaked, he will say perhaps, You should haue let mee alone, why did you trouble me? But when he is better aduised, he will thank them that brought him againe, because he knoweth, that if he had bin let alone, it might cost him his life. So in this case a man liuing in blindness and grosse ignorance, seemeth to himselfe for the present, to be in a marvellous good estate, and his soule in as good case as any mans: and when the Preacher shall cry vnto him, *Awake thou that sleepest, and stand vp from the dead*^l: Oh thou ignorant person, *Why wilt thou dye*^m? *save thy selfe from this forward generation*ⁿ. Like enough he will say, O M. Preacher, trouble me not I pray you, spare your sides, I am wel enough, my soule is in no such danger: but if the Lord once open his eyes, and make him a new heart, and a new spirit^o, then he will blesse God for him that called him, because he wil then perceiue, that otherwise he had euen runned on to his own destruction. He that trauelleth by night vpon the edge & hanging of a steep hil, from which if he should fall he must needs break his necke, goeth on without feare, because in the darke he seeth not the danger: but let him be brought back at light of day, it wil make him euen quake to thinke vpon the perill he was in; and wonder that euer he should escape it. In like sort, he that is in the blindness of ignorance without the word, the same is hourly ready to fall into the pit of hell: yet he feareth it not, because he seeth it not: but if euer he haue any remorde by the light of the Gospell shining in his heart, it will terrifie him to remember his former misery, and make his belly to tremble to consider it: so that here is the second error in this ignorant obiection. Men conclude there was no danger in the daies of blindness, because they saw no danger, whereas indeede the danger was so much the greater. A third error there is yet in this exception, and that is, that they consider not how that the refusal of Gods mercy which is freely offered in the preaching of the word, doth double their sinne, and make their condemnation more iust

^h Iohn 12. 35.

ⁱ Ephes. 4. 18.

^k Ephes. 2. 2.

^l Ephes. 5. 14.

^m Ezech. 18. 31.

ⁿ Acts. 2. 40.

^o Ezech. 36. 26.

^p Hab. 3. 16.

by whom it is refused. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they should not have had sin P, (saith our Sauour) that is, they had not beene chargeable with this sin of contempt of me and of my doctrine: But now haue they no cloke for their sin, now they have nothing to plead for excuse. If this were doly thought vpon, that the neglect of the word, when the meanes of making the same familiar vnto men, is become common among them, did make them guilty of a greater sinne before God, they would then not dare like the deafe Adder to stop their eares, and to suffer the holy doctrine of God to fall to the ground vnregarded. Thus I hope I haue shewed the vnreasonablenesse of this first reason.

Psal. 58. 4.

Nymp. This that you haue spoken, as it maketh me see plainly the idlenesse of this ignorant exception, so it calleth to my remembrance a notable place of Scripture, which I once heard you alledge in one of your Sermons, to this or the like purpose: it is a part of Paul his speech at Athens, The time of this ignorance (saith he) God lightly passing ouer, now he admonisheth all men euery where to repent. It seemeth to me that this place may be applied fitly to this matter.

Act. 17. 30.
in 16. 17.

Epaph. It is well remembered: for indeede that speech fitteth well with this point. Paul there disputing with the heathen that worshipped dumbe Idols, and thought the God-head to bee like Gold or Siluer, or Stone, grauen by the art and inuention of man; lest they should object nouely vnto him, and should say as the Papiſts doe at this day, how was it possible that all the World should for so many yeares be deceiued: he telleth them, that it seemed good vnto God, for causes best knowne vnto himselfe, to permit the ignorance of so many thousand of yeates, yet so, as that time of blindnesse beeing now determined, men should not plead prescription, reckoning more of an old error, then of newly reuealed truth: but should open their eares and hearts to this his generall summons to repentance. I thanke you for minding me of this place: it sheweth notably what a fond thing it is, not to take notice of the truth reuealed, but to preferre a long continued ignorance before it. Haue you any more exceptions of this nature, forged in the shop of ignorance? Like enough you haue: for it is an old and a true saying, that error is infinite, though truth be but one. If this that you haue named haue any more fellowes, bring them forth; I doubt not, but by the grace of Christ to discountenance them.

Nymp. Yes sure: when the multitude heare it taught, that the preaching of the word is a thing of that nature and necessarie use, that without it men ordinarily cannot be saued, they cry out by and by: And what is then become of our forefathers? they had no preaching: yet they were in their times good people, honest, and well esteemed in the places where they liued. If we should then yeeld to this, that this preaching is with so vneruent a regard to be depended vpon, we must needs condemne our Progenitors, out of whose loynes we are come, which to doe were more then inhumanitie. I can tell you Sir, this is an Argument that hath a generall approbation, and therefore I pray you looke well to it that you can answer it.

Judg 14. 12.

Epaph. Well, as hard as it is, yet it is not so intricate as was Sampsons riddle, that in seauen dayes could not be interpreted, for indeede it is of no value. It is true, we are both by Nature and by Religion to honor the memories of our Aunceltors, and in all good things to be imitators of them: but in matters of Religion we are not to haue an eye to them or to their times, but we must consider what it is which the Lord requireth at our hands. Whether they were saued or no, it is not for vs to enquire: if the Lord haue dealt more mercifully with vs then he did with them, we haue cause to magnifie his holy name, to looke to our selues that we despise not the riches of his bountie, and to leaue them to the Lord to whom they stand or fall. It is a good saying of an auncient Father to this purpose: If my Predecessors (saith he) either by ignorance or by simplicitie, haue not kept and holden that which our Lord hath taught them by his example and authority, the mercy of our Lord might pardon them. But as the good Doctor saith,

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saith, *We cannot hope for the like*, having better meanes of instruction. When the outward ordinary meanes failed, Gods hand was not shortened, but he was able even in the midst of blindness, to save those which belonged to the election of grace. As for vs, it shall not be safe for vs to neglect this *so great salvation*, or to receive the grace of God in vaine, foolishly adventuring our selves vpon the unknowne condition of our forefathers. And this I hope may suffice to take away the edge of this fancy. It is humanity to thinke the best of our forefathers, but it is divinity to looke carefully to our selves.

^u Heb. 2.3.
^x 2. Cor. 6.2.

Nymph. I am glad you have furnished me with so sufficient an answer to this exception which I have bene often assaulted with; and indeed, because of the common instinct of nature, it striketh the deeper impression, and is the more hardly remooved. But I thinke this that you have said may prevaile there, where obstinate wilfulnesse hath not gotten the mastery: and therefore I will say this up to us safely, as ever Goliath his sword was layed up, that I may ever have it in readinesse for such a purpose. But sir, there are yet more objections of the same stamp, which I must entreate you also to cleare, that so you may make me a perfect scholar in this point.

⁷ 1. Sam. 21.9.

Epaph. Who would thinke it possible that men so dull, and vncapable in matters which concerne their greatest good, should be abounding with arguments, wherewith to pleade even against their owne soules? But the diuell is a cunning instructour, and laboureth to strengthen men in ignorance, (because it is the scepter of his kingdome) as much as it is possible. Let vs heare therefore what the ignorant, with whom it hath bene your hap to converse, haue yet further to alleadge.

Nymph. They say that the most learned of you all, who are called Preachers, when you have shewed the uttermost of your cunning, can say no more then they know already; namely, that they must love God above all, and their neighbours as themselves: and seeing they know this well enough already, what needeth (say they) any more instruction?

Epaph. This is a conceipt scarce worthy the confuting: yet lest my silence should breed an opinion in you, that there is more in it then indeede there is, do but consider of it by the like: If a man speaking of husbandry, and hearing another to discourse of the great skill, and long experience that is requisite to make a man a good husband, should say by and by, Tush, what talk you so much of skill and knowledge herein? Why? It is nothing but this, to plow, to sowe, and to reape: should not such a one deservedly be laughed at, and bee a scorne to those which heare him? Yes, and not without cause; for every man knoweth, that though this be the summe of husbandry, yet there are diuers particulars belonging to these, which are neither soone learned, nor easily practised: so that he who desireth to be a good husband, & to profit by his labours, and to make the best of every thing, must not satisfie himselfe to know this, that there is nothing in husbandry but to care the land, and to reape the fruit; but hee must learne also what belongeth to the right performance of these, otherwise hee may erre in sowing, play the foole in plowing, and come short in reaping. And even so it is in this case: true it is, that the summe of all religion consisteth in this, in louing God above all, and a mans neighbour as himselfe: but what then? If a man shall thinke by and by that he is a good Christian, & knowes enough, because he apprehendeth these generals, the same is exceedingly deceived, for there are many other branches belonging to each of these, which vnlesse a man doe know, he can neuer love God as he ought, nor his neighbour as he should: so that to my seeming, even common reason is sufficient to conuince mens ignorance herein. There is not the meanest profession, the courtest trade, the plainest occupation, but it hath (as we say) a certaine mystery in it, there are many rules belonging to it: which must bee knowne, not in grosse onely, but even very precisely, before a man can in any mediocritie practise the duties of the same.

Nymphas. It is true that you say, for mine owne part I confesse it: but yet Ignorance will reply and say, Will you then urge upon euery common man the knowledge of euery point which in preaching you deliuer? that seemeth verie vnrasonable: neither can men that want the helps of learning attaine vnto it, and will not a good meaning make a suplie for all this?

Epaphras. How vnrasonable it may seeme in menscles, to be urged to such exact knowledge, I cannot tell: this I am sure of, that we that are Ministers, are charged to shew the people the whole counsell of God², and not to keepe a word backe². If we cannot be dispensed with to keepe secret any thing, how shall it be tolerated in the people to neglect the knowledge of that, which we are bound by vertue of our commission to deliuer? It was but an idle prayer of the Apostle, on the behalfe of the Colossians, to beg of God that they might be fulfilled with knowledge of Gods will, in all wisdom & spiritual understanding³: or for the Philippians, that they might abound in all iudgement, and discern things that differ⁴. I say these were but idle wishes, if so be, that full measure of knowledge is not required of euery Christian. And if some certaine rudiments, and as it were shreds of knowledge were sufficient, the Hebrews might well haue complained of wrong, in that they were so sharply censured for their being dull of hearing, and for that they still after so much teaching needed the first principles of the word of God⁵. And sure, if it be vnrasonable to urge men to know so much, we must (which were blasphemy) challenge the wise God as an vnnecessarie burdener of mankind, who hath revealed so much. As it is curiositie to enquire into that which God hath concealed, so it is vnthankfulnesse not to take notice of what soeuer he hath left written for our learning⁶. The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to vs and to our Children for euer, saith the Scripture⁷. I confesse, that if a man might attaine to the age of Methuselah, who liued nine hundred sixtie and nine years⁸, and should in that space equall his diligence in searching the Scripture vnto David, who made it his meditation continuallie⁹, yet many things would escape him, and he should when he had done all, be faine to confesse, that the greatest part of that which he knoweth, is not the least part of that which he knoweth not: but what then? Because a man when he hath done his best cannot know all, shall he therefore not labour to know any thing? God forbid. Ignorance by a kind of necessity may seeme to haue some excuse, but a voluntary neglect of that which a man may know, cannot haue so much as a colour of allowance.

Nymphas. I know what some will say, namely that by this, you will binde common men to be as cunning as your selues.

Epaph. As for that, I can easily answere it: I may lawfully wish as Moses did, that all the Lords people were Prophets¹, &c. yet I know too, that that exact and distinct knowledge, is not required of all men which is necessary in a Diuine. But what then? Although there be a larger measure of knowledge requisite in a Preacher then in a priuate man, yet the matters to be knowne (I speak of points necessary to saluation) are the same both for a Pastor and for a priuate Christian: For (as the Apostle saith²) there is but one Faith, which is therefore called One, because it is but one and the same thing, which is to be believed of all the faithfull: so that whatsoeuer a Diuine ought to know, for the saluation of his soule, the same is euery other man to know for the saluation of his soule also: That Faithfull word³, which the one is to hold fast⁴, the other is to hold fast likewise: As the Minister must improne the gaine saye⁵, so must the common believer, contend earnestly for the maintenance of the Faith⁶, euen as the General and the common Souldier fight in one quarrell, though more military skil be expected of the one then of the other: you that are hearers ought to comprehend and conceiue the mystery of godlinesse⁷ as truly, though (perhaps) not so cleerely as we that are Ministers.

Nymphas

² Acts. 20. 27.

³ Ier. 26. 2.

⁴ Col. 1. 9.

⁵ Phil. 1. 9. 10.

⁶ Heb. 5. 11. 12.

⁷ Rom. 15. 4.

⁸ Deut. 29. 29.

⁹ Gen. 5. 17.

¹⁰ Psal. 119. 97.

Maxima pars
eorum quæ
sciunt est mi-
nima pars
eorum quæ ig-
noramus.

Major scientia
non alia. Whi-
ta, defa. scrip.
q. 6.

¹¹ Ephe. 4. 5.
Thom. Aquin.
vpon that
place.

¹² Tit. 1. 9.

¹³ Reu. 2. 25.

¹⁴ Tit. 1. 9.

¹⁵ Iude 3.

¹⁶ Ephe 3. 18.

¹⁷ 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Latimers di-
stinction.

Nymph. Yet me thinkes it is hard for the common people (the greatest part whereof cannot so much as reade) to attaine to so much knowledge as you seem to perswade, especially if withall they be such as live by their labour, and haue charge of Children; how shall they spare time for such occasions?

Epaphras. Verily it is a wofull thing to consider the dulnesse that is amongst men: and they doe not know what they want that cannot reade (a thing which notwithstanding, of all other the partes of learning is the most ealie, and as soone learned, as to be able to play at the Cardes; if men were as desirous of the one as of the other:) yet howsoever, in this case of knowledge in Religion, men doe cast many more perils then they neede; and are like the sloathfull man of whom Salomon speaketh, who saith, *A Lyon is without, I shall be slaine in the streete*. For knowledge is easie to him that will understand^r: and the yoke of Christ, it is easie, and his burden light^r: Wherefore serueth the Scripture but to give unto the simple (sharpenesse of wit, and to the Childe knowledge and discretion^u? The entrance into thy words (saith David) sheweth light^x: as soone as a man in humility, and in a true desire to know God, doth but beginne to apply himselfe to the meanes of knowledge, hee shall secretly feele such a suddaine light cast in vpon his vnderstanding, that he shall be able to apprehend euen the verie secret of the Lordy, and so shall goe from strength to strength^z, untill he be filled with all the fulnesse of God^a. And we see by comfortable experience, with what gifts of iudgement and good vnderstanding of speech; yea, and of prayer also, the Lord furnisheth many, who notwithstanding haue wanted the helps of good education: wherein the Lord maketh good that auncient prophesie touching the Kingdome of Christ, that he would in it poure out his Spirit euen vpon Seruants and Maids^b, so that the eyes of the blinde should be lightened, and the eares of the deafe opened, and the dumb mans tongue be able to sing^c. And thanks bee vnto God for this unspeakeable giuft^d. So that it is a causelesse feare which men haue, who imagine the knowledge of the doctrine of saluation, to be a matter of that exceeding difficultie. Now for the multitude of worldlie busineses, the necessarie following whereof men pleade, partlie as a matter priuiledging them; partlie as a thing hindering them from intending these better occasions; if they had learned what this is, Seeke ye first the Kingdome of God, and his righteousnesse, and all these things shall be ministred vnto you^e: or this, What shall it profit a man though he should winne the whole world, if he lose his owne Soule^f? Then they would be ashamed eyther to thinke Religion a hindrance to their worldly thriuing (it beeing a furtherance rather, because it is the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich^g) or else to minde onlie earthly things^h, spending all their time about that which is on the earthⁱ, & neglecting that durable riches^k, euen the vnsearchable riches of Christ^l. I know the businesse of the world must be followed; He that laboureth not, let him not eate, saith Paul^m: and if there bee any that provideth not for his owne, and namely for them of his Household, he denjeth the Faith, and is worse then an Infidellⁿ. Yet I know too, that hee who will walke circumspectlie, not as a Foole, but as a wise Christian, must redeeme the time^o, and in the midtt of his worldlie employments remember that one needfull thing^p, which (when all other commodities become that which they are, euen nothing^q) will tarrie by him, and shall neuer bee taken from him. Moreouer, put case a man bee either so tyed by the nature and qualitie of his calling, that hee can spare no time (so as among others, day labourers and other poorer Trades-men seeme to bee) or else is destitute of meanes to further his knowledge when he is priuate and at home; yet if he would bee conscionable careful of profitable spending the Saboath daie, learning euerie such day, though but one point, and caring to keepe it, and to hide it in the heart^r, and ponder it^s in the weeke following, that hee may by that meanes make it his owne, it is incredible to one that tryeth it not, to what store of spirituall knowledge euen

^r Prou. 22. 13.

^f Prou. 14. 6.

^t Math. 11. 30.

^u Prou. 1. 4.

^x Psa. 119. 130.

^y Psa. 25. 14.

^z Psa. 84. 7.

^a Ephes. 3. 19.

^b Ioel. 2. 29.

^c I say 35. 5. 6.

^d 2 Cor. 9. 15.

^e Math. 6. 33.

^f Math. 16. 26.

^g Pro. 10. 22.

^h Phil. 3. 19.

ⁱ Col. 3. 2.

^k Prou. 8. 18.

^l Ephes. 3. 8.

^m 2 The. 3. 10.

ⁿ 1 Tim. 5. 8.

^o Eph. 5. 15. 16.

^p Luke 10. 42.

^q Prou. 23. 5.

^r Psa. 119. 11.

^s Luke 2. 19.

^c Ephc. 3. 4.

a common man shall attaine, and what *understanding* he shall haue in the *mysterie of Christ*. We haue a saying touching earthly things, that light gaines makes heauy purses, we shall surely finde it true in this, he that shall labour to grow richer euery Sabbath, but by one point, shall before he is ware of it, grow to a very comfortable portion of the sauing knowledge of Gods truth.

Nymp. I haue very carefully attended to this which you haue spoken, and I praise God I finde much comfort in it; yet there is one thing behinde, which I haue still looked for, which I am bolde to put you in minde of, lest you should forget it, and that is touching the good meaning which the common sort so much trust vnto: they say their heart is good, though their skill be small, and they hope that God will accept it. I pray you satisfie me in this also, & then I shall be reasonably furnished against the plea of the ignorant.

^u Luke 8. 15.

^x Pro. 23. 26.

^y Ier. 17. 9.

^z Pro. 1. 22.

^a Psalm 50. 17

^b Math. 12. 34

^c 1 Pet. 3. 15.

^d Rom. 10. 2.

^e Iohn 15. 2.

^f Rom. 14. 23.

Perk. ref. cath.

Whit. de sacra
script. quest. 2.

August. in lib.
contra Epist.
fund. cap 4.

Epaph. You doe well to mind me of it, howsoeuer I was euen now of my selfe comming to it: An honest and good heart ^u is a thing in the eyes of God much esteemed; and it is the especial thing he craueth of vs, to *gine him our heart* ^x: yet generally, that which men call a good hart to God-ward, is nothing lesse then that which it is called: for, so long as a mans heart is a dull, ignorant, vnregenerate, and vnreformed heart, it is *wicked aboue all things* ^y. There can be no goodnesse in that heart where there dwelleth grosse and blockish ignorance of God and of his truth: It is no good heart which *loueth foolishnesse, and hates knowledge* ^z, and *casteth the word of God behinde it* ^a. It is no good heart which *maketh not the mouth to speake out of the abundance of it* ^b, and to be able to *gine a reason of the hope that is in it* ^c. There may be a zeale of God ^d, where there is no knowledge of God; but it is but a blinde zeale, and God esteemeth it not. They which kill and persecute Gods seruants, may haue a kinde of good meaning, and may thinke that in so doing, they doe *God seruice* ^e, yet this cannot helpe them; so that men are deceiued in their good meaning: for no meaning is good, but that which is guided by knowledge; yea though the thing meant be in it owne nature good, yet if the meaner be not assured of the goodnesse of it from Gods word, his meaning is naught, and that by the rule of Scripture, which telleth vs, that *Whatsoeuer is not of faith, is sinne* ^f.

Nymp. I must needes yeeld to this that you say, that it is true: and yet me thinkes it is somewhat hard: for I remember I haue read in a good Author (whose iudgement I thinke you will also approue of) that there are many, who though they are ignorant in many things, yet they haue a meaning of true Faith, and that which is wanting in knowledge is supplied in affection: this is a very comfortable saying, and to my seeming also it doth somewhat fauour the conceit which men haue of being excused by their good meaning.

Epaph. I doe approoue of the Authour you alledge, as of a worthy Instrument in Gods Church: I agree also to that which you haue cited out of his writings: for (as he also saith) all men haue not that sharpnesse of conceit, and fastnesse of memory, to be able to wade into the depth of euery point, and to remember euery particular. And indeed an exact knowledge of the mysterie of Religion, so as to be able to dispute schollerlike of them, is not required of euery common man: to which end is the speech of Saint Augustine; *It is not* (saith he) *the quicknesse of understanding, but the simplicity of beleewing which is fittest for the people*: all this is true, but yet it maketh nothing for the defence of that brutish ignorance which men seek to colour with the pretence of a good meaning: for this rule, that good affection supplieth the want of knowledge, holdeth onely in those, who hauing in some small measure felt the sweetnesse of knowledge, doe labour to encrease in it. In such it is true, that the sincerity of the hart maketh a kind of recompence for the defect of knowledge: but, where there is a setting of a mans selfe vpon the dregs of ignorance, without grieuing and sorrowing for his owne dulnesse, without caring and endeavouring to thriue in knowledge, there this rule hath no place, there the pretended good meaning

is but sottishnesse, and that kinde of ignorance maketh a man a stranger from the life of Gods. And therefore it is well said of a learned man, that whereas God forgiveth manifold ignorances in his children, yet hee requireth that we bee teachable, and not hardened in our owne dulnesse and sluggishnesse. And surely they which want that which the Scripture termeth an *Endeavour*^h, and a *minde to know*ⁱ, cannot safely assure themselves that they are the Lords.

^h Ephes. 4. 18.

Melancthon.

^h Hos. 6. 3.

ⁱ 1 Iohn 5. 10.

Nymph. You have fully satisfied me touching this doubt: there is onely one thing more behinde, which ignorance pretendeth, and it is common in many mens mouthes: let them (say they) preach and we will pray; they hope their deuotion in praying will doe them more good then all your preaching.

Eph. It is a world to see the cunning of the diuell, who goeth about, to overthrow one holy duty by another, and to oppose those things which ought to go as it were hand in hand together. But what thing is there so senselesse, whereto ignorance in the Scripture may not bee perswaded? It is our English Proverbe, The blinde catch many a flie: and so indeede the ignorant in the Book of God embrace many grosse and ridiculous absurdities: for if men knew what the Scripture saith in this case, they would neuer cast out such an idle speech: Salomon saith, *He that turneth away his eare from hearing the law, euen his prayer shall be abominable*^k. What thinke you shall become of their prayers then who resolue not to afford the vse of their eares vnto Gods word? Doe they not make a faire hand, when by their contempt of preaching they bring a curse vpon their praying? Adde hitherto, that Paul saith expresse, that as men cannot call on him in whom they haue not beleued, so neither can they beleene without hearing, nor heare without a Preacher^l. Can men credit Paul in this, and yet thinke to pray well without the helpe of preaching? Surely no. How can men pray aright, without knowledge of their owne wants, without the apprehension of the promises of God, vpon which to builde their assurance to bee heard? And how can they attaine to either of these (ordinarily) but by the preaching, expounding, opening and applying of Gods word? That which men commonly call praying, is but a lip-labour, consisting in the recitall of a few wordes, the sense and meaning whereof is not vnderstood, and it is meere babbling in the eares of God; it may be well called the *sacrifice of Fooles*^m: and it may truly be said of such blind deuotions and tongue-prayers, which the hart doth not conceiue, as it was said of the hypocritical ceremoniousnesse of the Iewes; *The Soule of the Lord hateth them, they are a burden vnto him, hee is wearie to beare them*ⁿ. I thinke I haue sufficiently discovered the weakenesse of this sillie obiection.

^k Prover. 28. 9

^l Rom. 10. 14.

^m Eccles. 4. 17.

ⁿ I say 1. 14.

Nymphas. I praise God I doe also see the vanity of it; and I hope I for my part shall learne so to esteeme of preaching, as that I shall also reuerence that good meanes, which God hath in his wisdom ordained for my helpe in the performance of that holie dutie, that so by often hearing I may learne to pray, and by praying I may make good vse of the things I heare. Well Sir, now that you haue armed me against the comon pretences of the ignorant sort, whereby they make themselves beleue, or rather are made beleue by the Diuell, that it is no danger to contemne preaching, I must challenge your promise, and craue your help also touching another sort of me, who as they are ignorant in the matters of God, so are they come to a higher degree of hardnes, and haue euen almost taken vp their seate in the chaire of scorners^o, and doe not onely not regard preaching, (which is the fault of those of whom I haue spoken hitherto) but scoffe at it, and endeavour by lading it with sundry reproches altogether to disgrace it.

^o Psalm 1. 1.

Epaph. I am as willing to performe my promise as I was to make it; and yet I know, that in regard of these prophane ones themselves, this will bee but a thanklesse peece of service: for a scorne loneth not him that rebuketh him, neither will he go vnto the wise^p. Therefore I wil do it rather in desire to satisfie you, then in any great hope I haue to reclaime them.

^p Prou. 15. 12.

Nymp.

Nymphas. Indeede I haue sometimes cast in a word according to my skill, when I haue beene in the company of such; and they haue for the most part still shewed themselves like the Foole, who maketh a mocke of sinne, to whom it is euen a pastime to doe wickedly: yet it is good to be able sometimes to answer them according to their foolishnesse, lest they should bewise in their owne conceit. Well then, to come to the matter without circumstance, the exceptions of profane men against preaching are diuers, (some against the persons of the Preachers, some against the hearers, some otherwise, as you shal understand in seuerall. First, touching you that are the Preachers, it is common in their mouthes: Who be worse then they? If there be any couetousnesse, or pride, or ambition, and the like, where shal you finde it but in the Clergie? When they are in the Pulpit, they must needs say somewhat; and therefore, though when they be there, they be very hot and eager against vice, yet in their courses they are as bad or worse then other men. This is one exception.

^a Prou. 14. 9.

^r Pro. 10, 23.

^f Prou. 26, 5.

The obiections of profane men against preaching.

M Greenham.

^t Tit. 3. 11.

Simulata sanctitas est duplex iniquitas. August. in ps. 63.

Epaphras. The answer to this wretched exception (not for the waight of argument that it carieth, but for the varietie of leudnesse and error which is in it) will diuide it selfe into many particulars. First of all therefore touching them that obiect this, they are very properlie by a learned man of our times compared to foule Gamesters, who when they haue lost all at the Cards, and haue the last dealing in their hands, and perceiue, that, not likely to proue to their mind, rise vp in a chafe and sling downe all, and say there hath beene foule play plaid, when indeede the fault is chiefly in themselves: so many, beeing naught themselves, and being (as the Apostle speaketh) damned by their owne consciences, when they haue no other shift, cry out vpon Preachers, thereby to cloke their owne iniquitie: therein not much vnlike to him, that in a throng at a faire or market, bids men to beware of the Cut-purse, that he in the meane time (being a man of the trade) may practise his diuing into mens Pockets with the lesse suspicion. And marke it when you will, you shall neuer finde them any other then meere sensuall men, yea and for the most part openly noted for some one bad course or other, of drunkennesse, oppression, vsurie, couetousnesse, adultery, or the like, that make this obiection. Secondly, (because there may bee truth in an obiection, though there bee little truth or honesty in him that maketh it) know this therefore for the substance of this cauill, that put case it were so, (which thankes bee to God is not so) that all Preachers did confute their owne Sermons with their euill life, and had Esau's handes with Iacobs voice, and were like a file which smootheth other things, it selfe remaining rough: yet this could make nothing against preaching. For is Phisicke naught, because many Phisicians perhaps liue contrarie to their owne rules of phisicke? Or is law damnable, because some professors thereof doe liue lawlesse, giuing rules of equitie to others, themselves keeping none but ill rule? No man wil be so without sense to affirme it: why then? Shall the course of preaching bee condemned, for the supposed misdemeanor of them which preach? God forbid. Is any man so vnwise as to disobey a warrant comming apparantly from a man of authoritie, because the Constable or Tithing man is a naughtie fellow that bringeth it? Who then either but a Foole or a froward heart will tread the holie doctrine of God vnder his feete, because hee is a man of no good cariage that deliuereth the same? Thirdly, men are to consider this also, that all are not Ministers which are so called, neither all true preachers come from God that stand vp in the pulpit: for in these corrupt times many are crept into the Church of God by the window, whom God did neuer set apart to that holie seruice: now it is vnpossible, but that such as these (though they may a long time couer their double iniquity vnder a dissembled sanctity) yet should at last breake out into extremities. Now it is against common reason, to turne their miscarriage into the generall disgrace of all honest ministers. There be many counterfeite Dog-leaches, and pretenced Surgions, that hauing gotten a little Rubarbe or Balsamum,
and

and some few wordes of art, run about the Country and beguile the people, and cozen them of their Money, purging their purses, and scouring their bags vnder colour of clensing their bodies and searching their sores? Shal we say therefore that all Physicians though they beeneuer so well learned, neuer so well experienced, neuer so conscionable and wary in their courses of administering, are Cozeners, and that it were pittie but the Countrey were rid of them all? It were an indignity once to imagine it. There is no profession, but it hath as it were a certaine scumme, and there are some that make shew of it, that are altogether vnworthy of it. Shall the vilenesse and vnbecoming carriage of those that are but the refuse, and (as I may so speak) the taile^u of an honest profession, bee cast into the face of all the rest that belong vnto it? Reason it selfe saith that it is vnmeet. And men would soone yeeld to this, were it not that the Diuell hath taught them to be wise in any thing, sauing in religion, to fauour any profession sauing that of the Ministry. Men are heerein like vnto many Lawyers, who if you put them a case, without naming the parties, will tell you truly what is Law: but when they vnderstand who they bee whom the matter concerneth, then they change their opinion, and the Law is altered. So in the world, aske you any man of common vnderstanding this question, whether it be meet that all of a trade or company should be challenged, because some such or such are worthy to bee punished? Hee will tell you there is no reason for it: but come to the particulars touching Preachers, then he is of another mind, he will be ready to say that all Christs disciples were naught, because *Judas was a diuell*^x: and because he (it may be) knoweth some two or three *Sir Johns*, or some other (perhaps of better note in the eies of the world, but yet scarce like worthy of their places) to be climbing with *Diotrephes*^y, or embracing this present world with *Demas*^z, or carrying themselves insolently with *Pashur*^a, or otherwise keeping bad rule with him, who imagining that his *maister doth defer his comming*, begins to *smite the seruants and the maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken*^b: by & by he concludeth, that they are all naught, and voweth that he will neuer beleue any of them, for all their shewes of holinesse. Fourthly, for the further clearing of this point, this is also to be considered, that Ministers and Preachers doe not think themselves freed from common infirmities, or endued with some greater power or larger priuiledge against sin, then others: and therefore euery slip is not by and by to be taken hold of (as the manner is) and to be turned to the blemishing of a whole profession. He is said to bee a man of vpriight conuersation, not who slippeth neuer, (for *who is he that can vnderstand his faults*?) but he who by his sildome slips, and by his not continuing in any one knowne euill, sheweth himselfe to be a man that vnfaignedly desireth to haue his carriage such, as becometh the Gospell of Christ^d. Lastly, mark this also and you shall finde it true, those who are euer harping vpon this string, touching the liues of preachers, let them be vrged to particulars, you shall perceiue, that either their euill speaking is occasioned by such kinde of Ministers as I before named, or else, if they haue any exception against any of the better and painfull sort, it is such, which if it be wel examined and thoroughly looked into, will be found rather to fauour of malice in the speaker, then to argue any great error in the accused. I told you I shall be long in this point, but now I haue done, vnlesse you haue ought further to vrgue therein.

^u Isay 9. 15.

^x Iohn 6. 70.

^y 3 Iohn 9.

^z 2 Tim. 4. 10.

^a Iere. 20. 1. 2.

^b Luke 12. 45.

^c Psal. 19. 12.

^d Phil. 1. 27.

Nymph. *The most that I haue to say is, that men of the world that shall heare this Plea of yours, will straightway say, that you can speak well for your selues, and that though you aggrauate other mens sins vpon occasions, yet you can salue vp matters that concerne your selues, and help to conier your owne infirmities.*

Epaph. The diuell doth well answer his name; for there is nothing can bee so well spoken, but he and his can cauil at it: for mine owne part, I strue with my selfe to speak vnpartially. The profession I must loue, because God hath called

- mee vnto it; yet were I not of it, God hath taught me to honour it, because the
 * Rom. 10. 15. *feet of them are beautifull which bring glad tidings of peace*^c. And howsoever ma-
 ny do so far exalt themselues in their birth, in their riches, in their wisdom, in
 their personage & blood, that they think it a disparagement vnto them to con-
 secrate all their life to the Ministry of the Gospell: yet as Christ himselfe dis-
 dained not the title of a *Ministers*^f; so among all the titles of kingdomes and
 countries, this was to that great King the most honourable, *Salomon the Prea-*
 cher &c. I must therefore as a Minister, but especially as a Christian, endeavour
 to maintaine the credit of the Ministry. And yet I am not so caried away with
 a humor of magnifying the profession, but that I doe see & bemoane both mine
 own & other mens imperfections. I know, that though it be true, that we are ma-
 ny times slandered by foule mouthes, yet we often faile, & giue great offence eue
 vnto those that feare God, who depending vpon vs^h, are either grieved in heart, or
 (which is worse) grievously misledde, by our want of watchfulnesse ouer our
 selues, And I heartily beg of God so to *stablish vs in euery word and good worke*ⁱ,
 that while we liue wee may be an example to them that beleene^k: and when we haue
 finished our course, the people may haue cause to remember vs, and to follow our
 faith, considering what hath bene the end of our conuersation^l.
- Nymph. My heart saith Amen vnto your good praier: and God forgive vs our back-
 wardnes in that we make so seldome mention of you which are our Ministers, in our prai-
 ers vnto him. But now to the next exceptiō which is against the hearers; the cōmon saying
 is, that there are none vsually so bad as these Puritans (for so in their ignorance, not know-
 ing truly what a Puritan is, & in their malice seeking to disgrace honest men, they terme
 euery man that makes conscience of hearing the word, for the building himselfe in holy
 faith^m), they are nothing but a packe of Hypocrites, men that are not to bee trusted for
 all their faire shewes, holy horses, and the like names of disgrace, which hell captiuent:
 and out of this puddle of reproachfull speeches against the louers of preaching they ga-
 ther vp filth to cast into the face of preaching it selfe.
- Epaph. This exception, and that which went next before, are so well like,
 that they doe easily appeare to haue had one father, etten the diuell, who was a
 slanderer from the beginning: but blessed bee God, that it is no matter of any
 great difficulty to discouer, even the deepnesse of Sathanⁿ to be meere simplicity.
 First then for this, touching the hypocrisie of our hearers, it is but a meere slan-
 der: for (to the glory of God bee it spoken) there are many of those that reue-
 rence this so much contemned course of preaching, who haue not onely a shew
 of godlinesse, but do also feele the power thereof^o: and are carefull, as they beleene in
 God, so to shew forth good worke^p: so that their liues do adorne the doctrine of God our
 Saviour^q; yea and (which is the cause of so great malice of the vngodly) even
 reprobue the lewdnesse of the irreligious^r. Secondly, suppose it to be so (as it may
 well, hypocrites mingling themselues with the soundest Christians,) that some
 of those that carie a face of holinesse and zeale, and loue to the word, doe not-
 withstanding holde fellowship with the vnfruitfull workes of darknesse^s, living after
 the lusts of men, and running with the wicked to the same excesse of riot^t: yet who is a-
 ble to say that euer they receiued any encouragement by preaching, so to doe?
 Hath that taught them any such matter, and not rather the cleane contrary?
 Let malice speake, if it be not constrained for very shame to keep silence. Doth
 the preacher perswade any man to bee an vsurer, an oppressour, a hard dealer,
 a drunkard, a whoremaster, or the like? Nay it is well knowne, that hee testifieth
 to one & other, that the Lord is auenger of all such things^u, & that for them his wrath
 comes vpon the children of disobedience^x. These two things, namely, the falshood of
 the exception, and the bad consequence of it, if it were true, may stoppe their
 mouthes which vse it: but you tolde me (as I remember) that there be sundrie
 arguments of this kinde. I pray you let vs heare them: no doubt you shall see
 them all when they are arraigned and brought to receiue their triall at the
 Tribunall

Tribunall seat of Gods word, to be condemned for lying vanities, and to be no more able to stand before it, than the Philistins Dagon could keepe his shrine, (though no doubt he was fast nailed to it) when the arke of Iehouah came in place.

Nymph. The next exception is of a larger scope, and fighteth against you with the generall wretchednesse of this last generation. You shall see it in it owne likenesse, that you may the better iudge of it. It commonly runneth thus: In former times when there was lesse preaching, and the Scripture was more reason then now it is, the world (they say) was much better, there was more loue, more hospitality, more truth, more mercie, more good, dealing amongst men, then is to be found at this day: so that where as there is now much lawing, much contention, much oppressing, much cruelty, & sins of the like nature, all this is laide upon the backe of preaching: this is the leauen that hath put the whole world out of taste. This is also a peece of Dagon's stump. I make no doubt but the Lorde hath furnished you with weapons mighty thorough him, to cast downe holds, and euery high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of Christ Iesus.

1 Sam. 5. 4.

Epaph. I perceiue the diuell much doubteth the ruine of his kingdome: and therefore though preaching, amongst men is thought to be but winde^a, yet he feeleth his state begin to rotter with the power of it, so that hee doth stretch his wit, and set his pollicy on worke, and spareth for no engines to beat downe that which he shall neuer be able to ouerturne. And that as we haue seene hitherto, so I doubt not but we shall further see it in the examination of particulars. For those elder times (as men call them) first it is to be noted, that it is true indeede, that many of those who liued in them, were in the eyes of men very commendable for these morall vertues (as they are termed) of hospitality, of bounty, of humanity, of plaine dealing, and the like: the reason was this: Satan let them alone in these things, because he did hold them captiue at his wil in the principal. Though he doth hate these specialties in their owne nature (being an vtter enemy to al goodnesse) yet he was content to giue way in those lesser things, so long as he could nuzle them in ignorance of God & of his word, which he well knew was both hold enough for himselfe, and sufficient enough also to blemish and disgrace all those reputed vertues before God. But now, the light of knowledge being come into the world, and spreading it selfe further by the more common vse of preaching, Sathan secretly perswadeth many, that it is enough for them to haue knowledge, though they neglect practise: and he labourerth also by killing mens care of shewing themselves forward in these duties of ciuility, to lessen the credit of the Gospell, and to haue matter of slander against the knowledge of Gods truth. Secondly, to speake more specially of this last & worst age of the world: if it be well vnderstood, preaching may be said to be the occasion, though not the naturall cause of the extreame wretchednes thereof: according as *Paul* saith, that *sin* tooke occasion by the commandement, and when the commandement came, *sin* reuiued, and grew out of measure *sinfull*^b. Now the preaching & publishing of the truth, may be said to be the occasion of much euill in these last times, in two respects: first, because of the fuller discovery of sin: In the dayes of former ignorance many of the same grosse sins were, which now are, but either they were smothered in the darknes of the times, or if they were a little disclosed, yet they were reputed nothing so odious. But all things when they were reproued of the light, became manifest: for it is light that maketh all things manifest^c: so that now, sin being seen more, is thought also to be more: for sin not espied, is in mens iudgments as no sin. So then partly in this respect it may be said, that since there was so much preaching, the world hath been worse, because the holy doctrine which is taught, condemneth many things for sin, which the blind world esteemed as no sinne, and because the liues of those which are conuerted by preaching, doe shew more evidently the monstrous sins of those which are giuen ouer to vngodlinesse. Secondly, the preaching of the word is the occasion of sin, (as

2 Cor. 10. 4. 5.

1 Ierem. 5. 13.

^b Rom. 7. 5. 9. 13.

How preaching is the occasion of sin.

^c Ephes. 5. 13.

Gens humana
ruit in vetitum
nefas.

1. Cor. 15. 56

Jer. 20. 8.

Rom. 6. 1.

Gal. 5. 13.

Phi. 2. 12, 13.

Jude 4.

Isay 55. 11.
Verse 10.

2 Cor. 3. 15.

also the Law of God is) not in it selfe, or in it owne nature; (for it reprocueth sinne, and setteth it selfe against all manner of vngodlinesse:) but it is so, partly through the corruption of our nature, partly thorough the iust iudgement of God: the corruption of our nature is alwayes the more furious, the more it is restrained; struing still to doe that most, which is most forbidden: euerie humour desireth that most, whereby it may bee most increased. Let a Philitian forbid a melancholike man such and such meates, he shall finde himselfe to haue an appetite to no meate so much, as to that which is inhibited. I doe verily thinke other Trees in Paradise afforded fruite as pleasant to the eye, and as good for meate, as the forbidden Tree: but when as Satan had made a little entry, then euen that circumstance (that it was forbidden) did set an edge vpon the Womans desire, and made her more faine to eate of that one, then of any of the rest which were allowed. Paul saith, that *the Law is the strength of sinne*^d, both because it encreaseth the guilt of sinne, and because sin thereupon becommeth more outrageous: according as *Jeremie* witnesseth out of his owne experience; *I cried out (saith he) of wrong, and proclaimed desolation, therefore the word of the Lord was made a reproof vnto me*^e: it seemeth that vpon his preaching the people grew to greater insolency. Besides, there are many points of necessity to be taught, which though they bee deliuered with neuer so great circumspection, yet the lewdnesse of mans hart, not being ouerruled by the power of Gods Spirit, will abuse the same. So we see, the doctrine of Iustification by faith only breedeth negligence in good workes, as appeareth by the caueat of the Apostle, *What shall we (say then) shall wee continue still in sinne that grace may abound? God forbid*^f. So the doctrine of our freedome by Christ from the curse of the law, bringeth forth carnall liberty: that made Paul so carefull to vie that restraint, *Only vse not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh*^g. In like manner this point, that we are insufficient to keepe the law, and that we cannot so much as thinke a good thought, but as God worketh it in vs: Satan workes by and by vpon a supposed aduantage, and drawes (as much as he may) to carelesnes thereupon. And therefore the Spirit of God in his great wisdom, together with the teaching of that point, that it is *God which worketh in vs both the will and the deede*, couplerh this exhortation, *Make an end of your owne saluation with feare & trembling*^h. The same might bee shewed by many other points, which yet notwithstanding is so, not in the nature of the doctrine, but in the wretched disposition of mans heart, who abuseth the comfortable doctrine of the Gospell, and turneth the grace of our God into wantonnesseⁱ. Againe, as sinne through the corruption of nature taketh occasion to multiply it selfe by the doctrine preached, so it falleth out by the iudgement of God, that the contempt of much preaching bringeth forth abundance of iniquity. *My word (saith God by the Prophet) that goeth out of my mouth, shall not returne vnto me void*^k. And therefore in the same place it is compared to the raine^l; because as the raine maketh the ground, if not more fruitfull, surely then more vnprofitable: so the word of God, either maketh mens hearts softer, & themselues more fruitfull in good workes, or else harder, & their liues more abominable. And yet is this no fault in the word, for that is *vnto God the sweete sauour of Christ, euen in them which perish*^m. I haue beene longer in this point then I thought: but because it is so much stood vpon by many, I haue the rather endeauoured to manifest the full truth in this behalfe.

Nymp. Truly for mine owne particular, I must needes confesse, that you haue taught me more touching this point then I haue heretofore obserued. Indeepe I haue many times wondred, how it should come to passe that there being now (as I thinke) much more preaching against sinne then hath bene in the dayes of our forefathers, yet there should bee that aboundance of extreame impiety: but now I see the reason of it. First, ignorance in Gods word, is the supporter of Satans kingdome, and he hauing drowned men in that, gaue way to other things, which beeing good in their owne nature, and approoued of in the

the eyes of men, yet lost their grace, being done without knowledge. Secondly, mans corrupt nature, spider-like turneth the wholesome doctrine into posson, and striveth more, when it feeleth it selfe limited. Thirdly, it is iust with God, to giue them vp into vile affectionsⁿ, and to lay iniquity vpon their iniquity^o, that they may worke all vncleannesse, euen with greedinesse^p, who receiue not the loue of the truth that they might be sau'd^q. This I think is the summe of al which you haue spoken touching this.

ⁿ Rom. 1. 26.
^o Psal. 69. 27.
^p Ephe. 4. 19.
^q 2 Thel. 2. 10

Epaph. You haue well obserued it; that is the very substance of my answer to that exception, which I thinke is sufficient to satisfie those whom the truth of God grounded vpon the Scripture may satisfie. I pray you now proceed to the next, if there be any more of this kinde.

Nymph. There is only to my remembrance one more, and that is taken from the tumults and diuisions which accompany your doctrine: they say it many times breedeth difference euen among those betwixt whom formerly there was the best agreement.

Epaph. My good neighbour, maruell not at this: for as I shewed you in the beginning of our conference, that resistance doth alwaies accompany the first publishing of the truth, so also doth diuision of hearts follow it: and to this end is that speech of Christ to his Disciples, *Thinke not that I am come to send peace into the earth, (that is, such peace as the world dreameth of) I came not to send peace, but the sword.* We reade that when Paul exercised his ministry at Iconium, there was much adoe, and the people of the City were diuided, and some were with the Iewes, and some with the Apostles^r. This made him to be accused before the ciuil Magistrate, for a pestilent fellow, and a mouer of sedition^t, according as at this day (factious and humorous) is a common imputation. Now a diuision cannot chuse but follow preaching: for when as among the hearers, some mocke, some cleaue vnto the teachers^u, some beleene, and others beleene not^v, and men fall to haue great reasoning among themselues^x, there cannot but follow a kind of diuision and siding; so that they which in their ignorance accorded together touching religion, are by the working of the word sundred, and some become zealous followers, others malicious opposers, labouring to stop the passage of the Gospell, and to peruert the strait wayes of the Lord^y, and some neuters neither cold nor hot^z, but iust of deputy Gallio his religion, who cared nothing for those thinges^a. The preaching of the word is the Fan in the hand of Christ by which he parteth his Wheat from the chaffe^b; and whereby he maketh way for that great day of separation, in which the beleeuing sheep shall be separated from the rebellious and vnbeleeuing Goates^c. Again, let it not be forgotten that the word in the right applying of it, is called a light which maketh all things manifest^d. When things lye hid in the darknesse, though they all differ each from other in colour, yet they seeme all alike; but the light approaching, the variety of colours is soone descried. So, though men in the duskishnesse of ignorance are reputed to be knit together in the vnity of affection, yet when the bright beames of Gods word breake in among them, the thoughts of many hearts be opened^e, and then you shall see diuers humours, and variety of dispositions. By these thinges it appeareth, that if it bee well vnderstood, diuision and tumult (especially at the beginning and first entry of it among an vntaught people) must needes follow the soundnesse of settled preaching: though those that are reclaimed and brought to the knowledge of God, are all of one heart and of one soule^f, proceeding by one rule, minding one thing^g; and endenouring to keepe the vnitie of the spirit in the bond of peace^h.

^r Math. 10. 34.

^r Acts 14. 4.

^t Acts 24. 5.

A diuision must needes accompany preaching.

^u Act. 17. 32. 34.

^v Acts 17. 4. 5.

^x Acts 18. 29.

^y Acts 13. 10.

^z Reu. 3. 16.

^a Acts 18. 17.

^b Math. 3. 12.

^c Math. 25.

^d Ephe. 5. 13.

^e Luke 2. 35.

^f Acts 4. 32.

^g Phil. 3. 16.

^h Ephe. 4. 3.

ⁱ 1 Cor. 3. 18.

Nymphas. You haue (thanks be to God) at least to my iudgement, well quit your selfe against this sort of men. The next that you haue to do withall, are more dangerous, being such as Paule saith, which doe seemewise in this worldⁱ, and doe both line after a good ciuill fashon, and doe also make shew to bee not altogether enemies vnto religion. They haue also some insight into the Scripture, and are wont to reade it, and other good bookes priuately: onely this, their resolution is to keepe a certaine temper in matters

of Religion, to carrie themselves in an allowable conformitie, and not be over forward as many seeme to be, whose zeale they account rash and heady indiscretion.

^k Prou. 3. 7.

^l 1 Cor. 1. 25.

^m Psal. 68. 2.

Epaph. The danger of this kinde of people, is most of all in respect of themselves, because this, to be wise in a mans owne eyes^k, and to feare God, cannot stand together; otherwise, for answering any thing that they are able to object, it is a matter of no such great difficulty: For the foolishnesse of God is wiser then men^l; and as waxe melteth before the fire^m, so shall their best framed conceits vanish at the very name and presence of the Scripture.

The allegati-
ons of worldly
wisemen a-
gainst prea-
ching.

Nymph. I am glad you are so confident: for to tell you true, these things being as they are, very agreeing to mans reason, haue much troubled me, and I haue not upon the so-
daine knowne well what to answer, when in my presence these things haue bene urged by such as are thought in the world to be men of good discretion. First then it is demanded, why preaching should bee the most excellent meanes of spirituall instruction, and wherefore you should take so much upon you, as that your speaking should be able to saue mens soules: you be but men as others are, and it is but your pride, who because you would be thought some body, do thus endenour to extoll the worth and necessity of your profession.

ⁿ Job. 4. 19.

^o Job. 25. 6.

^p Psal. 73. 8. 9.

^q 1 Cor. 1. 21.

^r Rom. 9. 20.

^s Prou. 26. 16.

^t Verse 12.

^u Job. 5.

^v 2 King. 5. 13

^w 2 Cor. 10. 4.

^x Ephes. 4. 12

^y Psal. 118. 23.

^z 2 Cor. 4. 7.

^a 1 Cor. 1. 31

^b 2 Cor. 4. 7.

^c 2 Cor. 12. 9.

^d 1 Tim. 3. 16

^e 1 Pet. 1. 2.

^f Phil. 1. 6.

Epaph. Heere is indeede a perillous argument, it saoureth altogether of the sawcinesse of an ignorant and vnhumbléd heart. It is come to a proper passe, when as the sonne of man, who dwelleth in a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dustⁿ, and which is but a worme^o, shall dare to talke so presumptuously, and so to set his mouth against heauen^p, as to aske of God a reason of his doings. Is it not enough that the Lord hath made it knowe vnto vs, that his will is by the foolishnesse of preaching to saue those which belecue^q? O Man, who art thou which pleadest against God^r? And yet behold a reason, though this kinde of men generally are wiser in their owne conceits then seven men that can render a reason^s; and a man may haue more hope of a foole then of them^t. Looke what reason there was, why the Lord would haue the walles of Iericho beaten downe, onely with the sound of Rammes hornes, and with a shout^u: looke also why the Lord would haue no more circumstance obserued, in the clensing of leprous Naaman but onely this, Wash and be cleane^v; the same is the reason why God hath sanctified the ministry of man to so excellent a work, as is, the casting downe of the holds of Satan^w, and the gathering together of his Saints^x. God vsed no engines of warre, no pollicies of men, in the ouerthrow of the walles of Iericho, to the end the people might haue good cause to say: This was the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes^y: So, likewise, the Prophet vsed so little ceremonie about Naaman, that he might see the finger of God in his recovery. The same may be saide of Preaching, the Lord hath sanctified hearing to bee the outward meanes to beget faith: and hath imparted to us the treasure of his word in earthen vessels^z, to the end that the whole glory of our conuersion may be his, and that He that reioyceth in the renewing of his mind, and the reclaiming of his soule, may reioyce in the Lord^a, and acknowledge with humility, the excellencie of that power^b, which by so meane a meanes could bring so mighty things to passe. It is a generall rule, and holdeth in the whole course of our saluation, that Gods power is made perfect (that is, apparant and more conspicuous) through weaknesse^c. Great is the pride and arrogancy of the heart of man: and if it may find it selfe able though but by a thought, to further and helpe forward it owne saluation, it prides it selfe forth-with, and to it selfe secretly, it more magnifieth that little, which it imagineth to be in it owne power, then all that which it receiueth from the Lord. For this cause, and for the preuention of this euill, God in his great wisdom, hath so carryed the whole Mysterie of Godlinesse^d, from the first foundation of it in Heauen, (his Election according to his foreknowledge^e) vnto the last perfecting of it vntill the day of Iesus Christ^f, that when a man shall enter into a deepe consideration of it, and withall marke the order and progresse of his

his owne conuerſion, he may lay his hand vpon his mouthⁱ: and in the truth of his ſoule may ſay: *Not vnto me O Lord, not vnto me, but vnto thy name giue the glory*^k. This is the ſumme: the reaſon why the Lord hath thought good to commend the hearing of a Preacher, aboue other courſes, for the calling of vs from the power of darkeneſſe into the Kingdome of his deare Sonne^l; is, becauſe it maketh moſt for the ſetting forth of Gods glorie, which is the thing chiefly reſpected by him, and for which hee made all thinges^m, euen to this very end, that all be-
ing of him, and through him, and for him, to him might be glorie for euerⁿ. If it were left vnto man by his owne wiſedome to finde out God in the wiſedome of God^o, in the pride of his heart, fearing his owne diſparagement, hee would neuer make choiſe of preaching; (for we ſee how the world in the wiſedome thereof dooth euen ſcorne it) but hee would either drowne himſelfe in the puddle of ignorancc, as the moſt doe, or elſe truſt to his owne induſtrie, as many doe, vpon whom this curſe iuſtly falleth, that they become vaine in their imaginations, and when they pro-
feſſe themſelues wiſe, prooue meere fooles^p, thinking they know much, but yet knowing nothing as they ought to know^q. If this reaſon cannot ſatiſſie thoſe, who will needes haue reaſon of Gods ordinance, I know not what will ſatiſſie them. Once I am ſure, that as many as haue learned the firſt leſſon of Chriſtianity, to deny^r themſelues, and to vnderſtand according to ſobrieſſe^s, they will yeelde to this truth, and by yeelding, no doubt they ſhall haue comfort. Now whereas wee are thought to take too much vpon vs, ſo often as wee endeavour to make knowne the worth and excellency of our Office, it is a meere ſlander: for I hope wee haue learned to preach not our ſelues, but Chriſt Ieſus^t, and to account our ſelues no more then the Miniſters by whom yee belecue^u. Wee confeſſe the increaſe^x to be the Lordes: wee leaue the purifying and opening of the heart y^y onely to God. God forbid that wee ſhould dare (as it were) to encroach vpon the Lords right, ſeeing we know that he is a zealous God^z, and will not giue his glo-
ry to another^a. This is our opinion of our ſelues heerein, and if any man bee ſo ſuſpicious or ſo hardly conceited of vs, that he will not otherwiſe be perſwa-
ded, let him remember that *Loe thinketh not euill*^b. And yet I muſt needs adde this alſo, that ſo is the Lord pleaſed to bleſſe the labours of painefull Miniſters in his Church, that he vouchſafeth them the name of Gods Labourers^c, nay which is more, *Workers together with his grace*^d, and ſauers of them which heare them^e: The Lord, for the gracing and crediting of the Inſtrument, and to pre-
ſerue it from contempe, attributeth that to it, which is in his own only power to elect. Tell me now, whether this aunſwere doth in your opinion ſilence this grand obiection?

ⁱ Prou. 30. 32.
^k Pſal. 115. 1.

^l Col. 1. 13.

^m Prou. 16. 4.

ⁿ Rom. 11. 36.

^o 1 Cor. 1. 21.

^p Ro. 1. 21. 22.

^q 1 Cor. 8. 2.

^r Luke 9. 23.

^s Rom. 12. 3.

^t 2 Cor. 4. 5.

^u 1 Cor. 3. 5.

^x Verſe 6.

^y Actes 15. 9.

^z Exod. 20. 5.

^a Iſay 42. 8.

^b 1 Cor. 13. 5.

^c 1 Cor. 3. 9.

^d 2 Cor. 6. 1.

^e 1 Tim. 4. 16.

^f Iohn 3. 8.

^g Actes 27. 25.

^h Verſe 30. 31.

Nymph. A man would thinke, that this which you haue ſpoken ſhould ſtop their mouthes which are otherwiſe minded: but yet they do reſpſe and ſay, that you doe much ſtraiten the grace and power of God, and ſeeme as it were to ſte the working of Gods ſpi-
rit (which yet bloweth where it liſtethⁱ) to your tongues: as though without preaching
there were no ſaluation: vvhich you ſeeme alſo to cut them cleane off from any hope
of heauen, vvhich either heretofore haue vvaunted, or now enioy not the common and or-
dinary uſe of preaching.

Epaph. It is no wrong done vnto the grace of God, to limit it to thoſe means, which God in his wiſedome hath ſet apart, for the conueyance thereof vnto vs. When Paul was in his dangerous Sea voyage, in the night there ſtood by him the Angell of God, ſaying: *Lo, God hath giuen vnto thee all that ſaile with thee*^j: yet notwithstanding, when as afterwarde, the Marriners were about to flye
out of the Shippe, and had let downe the Boat into the Sea, purpoſely to make an
eſcape, Paul ſaide to the Centurion and the Souldiours: *Except theſe abide in the
ſhip, ye cannot be ſafe*^k. Did Paul heerein ſtraiten the almighty power of God,
in ſaying, there could bee no ſafety without the ſtaying of thoſe Marriners
in the Shippe? Was the Lordes hand ſhortened, that hee could not deliuer,

ex dote d'vatoz
bides.
Damaf. lib. 1.
ad calcem.

¹ Math. 3. 9.
Hoc folu non
poreft Deus
quod non
vult. Aug. in
lib. de Symb.
Dei poffe, vel
le eft, non pof-
fe, nolle. Tert.
aduerf. Prax.

² 1 Pet. 5. 2.
¹ Jer. 3. 15.

³⁰ Iohn 6. 31.

³¹ Iofh. 5. 12.

³² Ifay 37. 30.

³³ Gen. 1. 3. 11.
14.

³⁴ Rom. 8. 29.

³⁵ Actes 13. 48.

³⁶ Luke 11. 52.

³⁷ Jer. 18. 18.

³⁸ Amos 8. 18.

³⁹ Ifay 1. 9.

but by the skill and industry of thofe men? Surely no: but becaufe *Paul* knew, that God was not pleased otherwife to giue deliuerance; therefore he faid, that vnleffe the Mariners taried, the company could not be preferued. The learned doe thus diftinguifh of the power of God: it is an absolute power, by which hee can doe infinite things which he will not doe: fo *Iohn* faid of him, that he was able of the very ftones to raife vp Children vnto *Abraham*¹. Againe, it is an actuall or a working power, which he executeth in the gouerning of the world and the thinges therein: now when wee fpeake of the power of God in this fenfe, it may be truly faide, that he cannot doethat which he will not doe. So touching preaching, we may fay without any reftreint of Gods power, that except there be preaching men cannot be faued: not that God is tyed to the voice of man, and that without it he cannot faue; but becaufe the Scripture hath revealed to vs, that thefe thinges are linked together with an indiffoluble knot, praying, faith, hearing, preaching, fending. There is no praying without Faith, there is no Faith but by hearing, there is no hearing to beget Faith but of a preacher fent, that is, furnifhed with gifts from aboue, for the feeding of the flocke of *Chrift* depending vpon him², with knowledge and vnderftanding¹. If it fhall bee vr- ged (as me thought you alfo touched it) that wee fhall by this, preiudice them who haue either liued and died without preaching, or thofe who enioy it not now: I anfwere, that it is one thing what God can doe where the meanes is wan- ting, another thing what hee will doe where the meanes is fupplied. When the people of *Israel* were in the wilderneffe, and were deftitute of the vfuall helpes of tillage, the Lord gaue them Bread from heauen to eate^m: but as foone as they came into the promifed Land, the Man ceafed, neither had the Children of *Israel* Man any moreⁿ. Euery man was then to fall to his worke, and not to hope by thofe extraordinarie meanes to bee releued. To ftrengthen the Faith of *Hezekiah*, the Lord faid to him, Thou fhalt eate this yeare (fuch as groweth of it felfe, and the fecond yeare fuch things as grow without fowing, but in the third yeare, fow yee, and reape, and plant^o, &c. He that (thofe two yeares being expired) had tru- fted to the former courfes, neglecting husbandry, out of al doubt he might haue bin ftarued: and yet before, he that had called Gods power, to furnifh them with food without fowing, into queftion, had bin worthy to be punifhed. In the be- ginning of the worlds creation, God for the manifefting of his owne power and glorie made light to be, and the earth to bud forth, before the Sun (which to vs is the fountaine of light, and the cherifher of the vital heat which is in al things) was created^p: yet now, God hauing eftablifhed an orderly courfe, wee cannot hope eyther of light in the ayre, or for life among the creatures vpon the earth without the Sunne. I doe apply all thefe thinges thus: the want of the meanes of publike preaching in former ages, could not bee any hinderance vnto God in fauing thofe which he knew before^q, and who were ordained vnto eternall life^r. And I am out of doubt of it, that in the daies of popery in this Land, when the Key of knowledge was vterlie taken away^t: and the law perifhed from the *Priest*, counfell from the wife, and the vvord from the *Prophet*^u, fo that if a man did wander from Sea to Sea, and did runne to and fro from the North euen vnto the Eaft to feeke the vvord of the Lord, yet hee could not finde it^v, I fay, I am cleere in it, that ma- ny then in that darkneffe, did (as the prouerbe is) fee day at a very little hole, & very ftangely came to the knowledge of the truth, fome by the fight of fome parcels of Scripture, fome by the writings of good men, fome by conference with others, though the fame were both very feldome and very fecret, fome by knowing little more then the Lords prayer in Englifh; and yet had they that af- furance of the truth of it, & felt that comfort, & receiued that fweetnes by it, that (as the hiftories of the church make mention) they were contented to facrifce their liues, & to fpend their beft blood to bear witnes to it: which the Lord did, that it might appeare to al enfuing ages, that he referved a fmal remnant^x, euen as the

(fhep-

Shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the Lion two legges, or a piece of an eare y, then ⁷ Amos 3. 12, when as the Daughter of Sion was become as Sodome, and not much unlike unto Gomorra; and withall, that at the day of Christs appearing, when he shall consume that man of sinne², he may have witnesses against him out of all ages, both of the deceivablenesse of his superstitious doctrine, and of the cruelty of his tyrannous and bloody proceedings. That which I say touching the times of the Egyptian darknesse of Poperie, may be said also of many parts of the Realme, which notwithstanding the long flourishing of the Gospell in this Land, yet (I know not through whose default) never enjoyed the benefit and comfort of settled preaching: for though for the most part it be true, that where the Lord hath much people, there he is not wanting to send some, who may continue with the, and teach the word of God among the², yet as he sometimes vouchsafeth a preacher to impudent and stiffe-necked Children, who will not heare, to that end, that in the day of vengeance they may know there hath bene a Prophet among them^b: so also it pleaseth him by secret and hidden, yea, and very unlikely courses, to afford vnto some hearts the blessing of inward conuersion, vpon whom he hath not bestowed the benefit of outward instruction by a Preacher. But what then? Yet this remaineth certaine, that as when the good meanes is wanting, and cannot by any waye bee procured, the power and mercy of God must not bee distrusted: so when the meanes is bestowed, his bountie cannot without great sinne bee despised. It is heerein, as it is in the case of the Sacraments: it is not simply the want of them (when a man cannot, though faine he would, become partaker of them) but the contempt which is damnable. As for example, if a Father vnneccessarily deferre the baptisme of his Childe longer then the time appointed by the order of the Church, it is a sinne in him, if the Childe dye without baptisme: so likewise for a man vsually to turne his backe from the administration of the Lordes Supper, making no reckoning of the comfort offered therein, it is doubtlesse a fault, which God will not let to goe away vnpunished. The same may bee said of the word preached, if a man be deprived of it through a kind of vnauidable necessitie, simply there is no preiudice to his saluation thereby, if so be these things be ioyned with it: first, that in this strait, the Soule doe pant^c after that great benefit of which it is deprived: secondlie, that a man doe both desire and require that one thing of the Lord, euen to behold the beantie of the Lord^d, namely, the light of the glorious Gospell of Christ, which is the Image of God^e: thirdlie, that he be carefull to vse all such helpes of reading the Scripture, and of other godly Treatises, and of conference with men of knowledge, as may possible be procured. But if so bee a man may by any meanes enjoy the benefit and comfort of preaching, though it be with some both charge and trauel: if then he carelesslie neglect it, and trust to other meanes, no doubt the Lord will curse those means vnto him, which for all that in their owne nature are good, and might profit, if they were not vsed with contempt of the principall. This is my iudgement touching this supposall, that by pressing the worth of preaching, we do confine as it were Gods grace, and tie it to our tongues, and do cut them short of all hope of saluation, which by any occasion haue liued or do liue without it.

² 2. Thes. 2. 8.

^a Acts. 13. 10.

^b Ezech. 2. 4, 5.

^c Psal. 42. 7.

^d Psal. 27. 4.

^e 2. Cor. 4. 4.

Nymp. Well Sir, this kind of men for all this is not satisfied, but being beaten by argument & Scripture from one fond conceit, they forthwith runne to another, and seeke not so much how to make a direct reply, as to beape vp diuersitie of objections. And therefore when they haue said all they can, for the pressing of those particulars, the vanity whereof you haue laid open to the full, then (hoping to obtaine that with multitude of wordes, which with waight of reason they cannot) they will needes know a reason why there may not be as much good gotten by their owne private reading in the Bookes of the Scripture, and in other good Sermons and Treatises which are set forth, as by hearing a Preacher in the Church.

Epaph.

- Epaph.* Touching private reading of the Scripture, I am so farre from dis-
king it any way, that with that learned *Chrysostome* I doo alwaies exhort, and
will not faile in stirring vp the people, that they should not onely diligentlie
attend to matters spoken publikely, but endeouour themselues also to reade
and peruse the Scriptures priuately. God forbid, I or any other of my profes-
sion, should maintaine that Popish Maxime, that the common vse of the
Scripture is the cause of all Heresies, and not rather the contrary taught by
Christ, and seconded by the learned in Gods Church, namely, that the cause
of all euill, whether it be error in iudgement, or corruption in manners, is
the ignorance of the Scripture. Wee might well reioyce in the happinesse of
our times, if we might bee occasioned by our peoples experience in the Booke
of God, to say as one said of old: You may (saith hee) see commonly our o-
pinions and rules of Religion to be held and maintained not onely by the Mai-
sters of the Church, and Teachers of the people, but even by Smithes and
Shoo-makers, and Husband-men, and Hedgers, and Heard-men, yea and by
Women and Seamsters: the comfort which wee should take heerein, should
make vs little to esteeme the scoffes of Ismalitish Papists, who object it to vs
as a matter of disgrace, that wee haue prophaned the Scripture by making it
common to Artificers and Women. Now that which I say of the private rea-
ding of the Scripture, I say also of the perusing of godly Treatises, & Sermons,
and the like. I wish mens care in this kinde encreased, and I know that thereby
there commeth much comfort vnto Gods people: But yet I dare not to a-
scribe that to private exercises, which by the doctrine of the Scripture belong-
eth to the publike ministry, namely, the begetting of Faith, and the gather-
ing together of the Saints^h of God into his Church. I finde in the holy Hi-
story, the teaching by the ministry of man to be preferred before those things,
to which I suppose no man will dare to equall his owne priuate industrie.
When Christ called *Paul* from heauen, and *Paul* demanded, *Lord what wilt thou
that I doe?* A man in reason would haue thought, that there could haue beene
no more excellent meanes for *Pauls* instruction, then if Christ should haue dis-
coursed to him with his owne mouth; yet to maintaine the credite of Gods or-
dinance, and to make knowne the blessing that followeth it, *Paul* is comman-
ded to depend vpon the ministry and direction of *Ananias*. Not much vnlike
is that example of *Cornelius*^k: it pleased God to send an Angell vnto him, to
testifie vnto him the remembrance of his almes and prayers with the Lord:
why then did not the same Angell proceede to instruct him in the mystery of
Christ? What credit would the wordes of so glorious a Creature haue caryed?
(saith flesh and blood:) and yet the Lorde in his wisdom thought it the most
fitting course to put ouer *Cornelius* to the ministry of *Peter*, (*Send men to Ioppa
and call for Simon, he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to doe*^l: to the ende that it
might appeare, that it pleaseth him to vse mans voyce as his Instrument, and
to yce our Faith vnto it. Shall any man dare to put his owne priuate courses of
reading, into the ballance with publike preaching, when as it hath seemed good
to the wisdom of God to preferre it (in regard of mans vse) before the imme-
diate teaching of Christ, or the instruction of an Angell? Christ a little before
his death, among other things whereby he endeouored to comfort the hearts of
his Disciples, deliuered to them this promise, *Verily, verily, I say vnto you, hee
that beleeueth in me, the workes that I doe he shall doe also, and greater then these shall
he doe*^m. It was a promise made vnto the whole Church, neither peculier to
the Apostles, nor common to euery Christian. If any man demaund what
bee these greater workes, which shall be done by men, which Christ did not: I
confesse with the learned, that it was in part verified in the miracles of the Apo-
stles; as namely in that of *Peter*, who cured the diseased with his shadowⁿ, which
may be thought greater then that of Christ, who healed with the touch of his gar-
ment:
- Chrys. homil. 5
de Lazaro.
Alphonf. de
Castro. lib. 3.
c. 6. de iust. pu-
nit. haeret.
Math. 22. 29
Chrys. homil. 9
in epist. ad Col
- Theodoret. li.
5. de corriged.
Gra. affectib.
- Hof. de sacro
vernacule
legendo.
- ^h Rom. 10. 14.
^k Ephe. 4. 12.
This is noted
by August. De
doct. Christ.
lib. 1. in Prolo-
go.
^l Actes 9. 6.
- ^m Actes 10.
- ⁿ Verse 5. 6.
Caluin vpon
that place.
- ^o John 14. 12.
Caluin vpon
that place.
Aug. Tract. in
Ioh. 71.
Chrys. hom. 12
in Acta. Apost.
^p Actes 5. 15.

ment: yet thereby was chiefly meant the conuersion of the world, by the preaching of the Gospell, to which it pleased our Sauour to depute his Apostles and their Successors: a worke indeed farre greater then any of those miracles which he wrought heere vpon earth by his owne immediate power. His worke it is, I confesse, the conuersion of Sinners, (for neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ^p; yet he thought it most agreeing to mans infirmity and weaknesse, and the best meanes both for the furtherance of his owne glory, and the tryall of our obedience, to put men in the seruice of his Church, that they may pray the people, in *Christes* stead to be reconciled vnto God ^q. Who then can without great presumption, and no lesse contempt of Gods maiesty, relie vpon any other meanes for his spirituall edification, when as the Lord had thought it meet to put his wordes in the mouth of a man ^r, and to be with us, then to speak from heaven by an immediate voyce, or to employ those *ministring Spirits* in that seruice, which notwithstanding are sent forth for their sakes which shall be heires of salvation ^t? Great is the benefite of priuate reading, especially of the Bookes of holie Scripture: but yet, as giuing attendance to reading, in a Minister ^u, is to make him the better able to discharge his publike dutie, in exhortation and doctrine: so the chiefe end of priuate searching the Scripture by priuate men, is in respect of the publike ministrie, that before hand they may bee prepared to it, and afterwarde may the better know how to profite by it. For the former of these two (namely preparation by reading to the publike hearing,) it is a fit saying of *Chrysostome*: Wee doe (saith hee) oftentimes tell you before hand, the Text whereof our purpose is to entreate, that in the meane while you (taking your Booke, and weighing the summe and state of the place) may make your mindes fitter to receiue those points which shall afterward bee deliuered. As indeede the ignorance of the people in the language of the Scripture, and the generall course and Storie of the Bible, maketh preaching to bee much lesse profitable vnto them. Now for the latter, to wit, the vse of priuate reading for profite after hearing, wee haue that memorable example of those worthy Gentlemen of *Berea*, who hearing the Apostles preach, and receiuing the word with all readinesse, searched the Scriptures daylie whether those things were so ^x.

Nymph. Why, but (may it be said) is not the Scripture the ground and foundation of all your doctrine; and are you able to say more, or to speake better then many both auncient and learned men, whose excellent Sermons are put in print, and whose godly treatises are extant for the benefite and comfort of Gods people?

Epaph. If we preach vnto you any other doctrine then that which the Scripture will allow, we are worthy of *Pauls* curse ^y; we know and confesse the Bible to bee the most exact rule, and square, and canon, by which all our Sermons must be tried: we acknowledge also, that holy men which haue written touching matters of religion, and haue published their well laboured, and zealously deliuered Sermons, haue (many of them) set downe the truth of God soundly, and bin the meanes of much comfort to well affected people: but yet, though the doctrine be the same in substance, that is read priuately, and which is publicly deliuered, yet the like fruit cannot follow vpon both. If you demaund a reason, I can giue no better then that which Christ gaue of Gods reuealing those things to babes, which he hid from the wise and prudent, *Euen so it is, because the Lord his good pleasure is such* ^z. When the people of Israel were in their iourney to Canaan, and were fed with bread from heauen, we reade that if vpon the weeke daies any man had reserued of the Manna till the morning, it was full of Wormes and stanke ^a: but beeing kept the day before the Sabaoth vntill morning, it stanke not, neither was there any Worme therein ^b. I would faine see who could giue me any other reason, why the Manna shold at the one time corrupt,

at

Aug. tract. in
Iohn. 72.
Origen. Hom.
6. in Ila.
Cyn. li. 9. c. 41
P 1 Cor. 3. 7.

^q 2 Cor. 5. 20.

^r Ierem. 1. 9.
^t Exod. 4. 12.

^t Hebr. 1. 14.
^u 1 Tim. 4. 13.

Chrys. homil.
3. de Lazaro.

^x Acts 17. 11.

^y Gal. 1. 8.
Α' κρισην ζυγην, καὶ
υπομμεν καὶ κρισην
12. Chrys. hom.
13. in 2 Cor.

^z Math. 11. 26.

^a Exod. 16. 20.
^b Verse 24.

at the other, continue sweete, but onely this : God shewed his power in preferring it at the one time, because it was his owne ordinance for the better sanctifying the Sabaoth, and he shewed his iustice in totting it at the other time, because he had forbidden it, to teach them to depend vpon his providence. After the same sort, one man, some taking himselfe to bee a wise man, and thinking himselfe to be as able to draw good matter out of the Bookes of the Scripture, and other Writings, as the best Preacher of them all, either contemneth or else neglecteth the publike Ministry : Another, in obedience to Gods commaundement, watcheth dayly at the gates of the Lords house, and giueth attendance at the postes of his doores^c, framing all his private readings and meditations to the fitting of himselfe for the assembly exercises. You will aske me, why should the knowledge of the former, rot (as it were) and putrifie and become nothing worth, he being a man of good capacity and vnderstanding, and reading none but sound Authours : and the other, thriue in knowledge and in the power of godlinesse, that yet for all that learneth no other doctrine then the former findeth in his good Bookes at home ? I might happely, but verily for mine owne part I will seeke no other answere but this : God hath promised to bleesse the latter course, saying ; *If thou cause thy eares to hearken vnto wisdom, and incline thine heart to vnderstanding ; then thou shalt vnderstand the feare of the Lord, and finde the knowledge of God^d.* But for the other, because it is a course of mans owne deuising, sauouring of inward pride, therefore the Lord turneth it (as he doth all humane wisdom) into foolishnesse^e : so that the knowledge so gotten (I meane by another by-way, and not by that old trodden path of hearing) either becommeth as the Apostle speaketh, *vaine iangling^f*, or else if it be found, in regard of the apprehension of truth, yet it swimmeth onely in the braine, and neuer worketh to the renewing and seasoning of the heart.

Nymph. *There is yet one thing more touching this conceit which men haue, to gaine more by their owne priuate courses then by the publike Ministry, and that is this : men that write, write with great deliberation and aduice ; as for you when you preach, you speake many times at aduenture, and nothing so iudicially as do those who commit things to writing. Besides that, many of you are but Nouices and young Schollers, whom S. Paul seemeth not so well to approue of^g. And for these causes, as they must needs be iudges of your iudgement in many things, so neither can they receiue that profit by your preaching, as they may by priuate reading.*

Epaph. Alas, a poore excuse : it is true, if men write as they ought, they write with iudgement and heedfulnessse : and so doe they also preach with good aduice, who haue learned to feare him, that hath saide ; *Cursed be he which doth the worke of the Lord negligently^h.* I will not goe about to patronize the negligence and carelesnesse of any man : I wish wee would all study to shew our selues approoued vnto God, *Workemen that neede not be ashamed, diuiding the word of God arightⁱ*, that so when the fire shall trie euery mans worke of what sort it is, ours may abide^k. Yet this I will say, that if you compare like with like, that is, sound Writers with sound Preachers, you shall finde the Sermons of the one, framed with as good iudgement, as the Booke and Writings of the other. And if that bee commendation (as I see no reason but it should) for a mans labours to smell of the Candle, do doubt you shall perceiue euen the ordinary exercises of painefull and conscionable Preachers to sauour of as much art and industry, as the Treatises of your most iudicious and grauest Writers. Neuerthelessse, because as the Scripture saith, *In many things wee slippe all^l*, both Preachers and Writers, both Readers of Bookes, and Hearers of Sermons, therefore there is a necessity of care and iudgement in those that seeke to reape benefite by other mens labours, that like Bees they may sucke out the best and sweetest, and most wholesome doctrine from them both. Now for the youth of many

^c Prou. 8. 33.

^d Prou. 2. 2. 5.

^e 1 Cor. 1. 10.

^f 1 Tim. 2. 6.

^g 1 Tim. 3. 6.

^h Ier. 48. 10.

ⁱ 2 Tim. 2. 15.

^k 1 Cor. 3. 13.

Olere Lucernam.

^l James 3. 2.

many Ministers, which men (as you say) pleade, and seeme also to ground their conceit vpon the Scripture: I answer: first, that it is greatly to be lamented to see the overforwardnesse of many yong men, who not considering the weight of that holy calling, doe sodainly thrust themselves into it, and vndertake (as the saying is) to teach others, before they themselves are well instructed, so that I doe verily thinke, there are not at this day more nouices and punies of any profession, then there are of the Ministry. And for the preventing of this euill, were those decrees of the auncient Councils, which set downe a certaine age, before which a man was not to bee admitted to the office of a Minister or Bishop in the Church. Secondly, I addeth this withall, that the graces of God are not to be limited to any age. It was a good distinction of the Heathen men, betwixt a young man in yeares, and a young man in conditions: It is meete that young men should say with *Elihu*, *The dayes shall speake, and the multitude of yeares shall teach wisdom*. And yet it must be remembered which is also there noted, that it is the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth vnderstanding, and that the aged doe not alway vnderstand iudgement. Young *David* by the studie of Gods word, may come to vnderstand more then the ancients. *Paul* biddeth *Timothy* that no man should despise his youth. If wee shall distinguish the age of man, according as some Philosophers did, then *Timothy* could not bee aboue five and twenty when *Paul* so wrote vnto him. Touching the place it selfe (that a Bishop must not be a young scholler) it must not bee vnderstood of a young man in yeares, but of one lately conuerted to the Christian faith, and newly planted in the Church. *Timothy* liued in Asia, and therefore was necessarily to furnish the Church out of Gentilisme: for this cause *Paul* aduiseh him to make choice of such as were settled in the doctrine of Christianity, and not to aduance men to the dignity of a Bishop by and by after their conuersion. So that, howsoeuer I confesse, that maturity of yeares is to be respected in a Minister, because in the ordinary course it is accompanied with ripenesse of iudgement, yet neither doth that place of the Apostle prescribe a law for the debarring of yoong men from the ministry, neither doth any place of Scripture disable that age, or make it vncapable of the ministerie, so that it be graced with gifts sufficient for so excellent a function. And this I thinke may bee answer full enough to this obiection.

Nymphas. What exception these wise men will make against this your answer, I knowe not; you haue resolved mee to the full: and concerning yong Ministers, I heard once an acquaintance of mine, who was brought vp in the Vniuersity, say, that hee knew many schollers in his time, that when they were young and fresh, were of very great hope, and were also very zealous, and had a good gift in preaching, who notwithstanding in time grewe colde, and lesse able for gifts, both of iudgement and zeale, and utterance to doe good in Gods Church: but these points I will not meddle with; onely your discourse brought that into my minde which I heard a friend of mine say a good while since. I must craue your iudgement yet a little further, touching these men; besides all these pretended reasons, they stand much vpon two things, which flesh and bloud doth well approoue of: one is, that fewe of the great men of the world doe esteeme preaching; the other is, that it is not wisdom for a man in matters of religion to bee too forward. What say you to this?

Epaph. I say, it is a harde matter for those men to come to amendment out of the snare of the diuell, which are taken of him at his will: and wee had neede to begge of that God, who commaundeth the light to shine out of darkness, that hee would shine in our hearts, to giue the light of his knowledge: for if a man bee once entangled in errour, *Sathan* hath so many deuises to hold him in, that it is a hard matter for him to get from him: yet if men haue any

Z z

grace,

Prus ad docē-
dum, quam
ad discendū.
Con. Carth. 3.
cap. 4.
Con. Agat.
c. 16.
Con. Tolet. 4.
cap. 17.
Arist Eth li 1.
in Iob. 32. 7.

n Verse 8. 9.
o Pl. 119. 100.
p 1. Tim. 4.
Laert li
in vita Py-
thag
Chrysost. obser-
ueth that Paul
saith not
but σοφιστης

2. Tim. 2. 16

2. Cor. 4. 6.

grace, or will yeeld to any reason, they may soone see the vanity of these persuasions, as I will briefly declare vnto you. In the former there are two things to be noted: first, that if the practise of men were a sufficient rule in matters of Religion, there are (thanks bee to God) many honourable personages, many nobles, many gentlemen, many of good note for worldly respects, who doe vnfaignedly reuerence and heartily embrace the preaching of Gods word, and no doubt it is vnto them *the ioy and reioysing of their heart*, and they esteeme of it to be euen as it is, *The power of God vnto saluation*: so that if the approbation of men were a reason of force, it is not wanting vnto preaching: but as God hath a people out of all, so that also hath friends and fauourers among all. Secondly, suppose that this course of Preaching were vtterly despised, and all the great wise men of the world did euen scorne it, and treade it vnder their secte, yet this were a poore argument, vnlesse we will say, it was a good reason which they vsed against Christ, *Doth any of the rulers or of the Pharisees beleue in him*? The best things haue not commonly the most voices, and many times according to the proverbe, the greater part is too hard for the better part. There was a voyce put vp for making a golden calfe, and there was not one against it^x. There was a voyce, what should be done with Iesus, And all cryed, *Crucifie him*. Another was, whether God should bee God, or *Baal* should bee God: and none held with God but *Eliab*^z. *Saint Augustine* saith, that the Church was sometimes in one *Abel*, and in one *Enoch*: God forbid wee should bee in the number of those, who define the church by the multitude, we are content to leaue that absurdity to the Papists: wee know that Christs flocke is a *little flocke*²; and wee must endeauour to grow to that resolution, to say, *Lord, though that all men should be offended by thee, yet will I neuer bee offended*^b. Now for that other persuasion, that it is not good to bee too eager in matters of religion, I know it to be the common persuasion of a great many: but yet this is a sure rule, that that man who thinketh himselfe to haue knowledge, and zeale, and religion enough, the same hath no knowledge, no zeale, no religion at all. For wherefoeuer the graces of God are in truth, there is (in regard of the sweetnesse which a man findeth in them) *a forgetting that which is behinde, and an endeauouring a mans selfe to that which is before*^c, grieving more for that which is yet wanting, then reioysing in that which already is attained. In the parable of the Talents, it is said, that *from him that hath not, euen that he hath shall bee taken away*^d; but in another of the Gospels it is said, *From him shall be taken euen that which it seemeth that he hath*^e. So that it is but a conceit and opinion of grace, where there is no desire to increase in grace. It is a good saying; when a man is come to that passe that he hath no desire to be better, then he quite leaueth off to bee good. And therefore men doe but deceiue themselves, in neglecting the benefite of preaching, vpon a conceit, that it is best to keepe a temper in matters of religion, and to content themselves with a certaine portion of knowledge, and with a set measure of zeale, and neuer to proccede further; for wee must desire the *sincere milke of the word, that wee may growe thereby*^f. And indeede if so bee that wee haue tasted how bountifull the Lord is, wee shall neuer bee able to satisfie ourselves, either in the labouring after knowledge in religion, or in the zealous profession and practise of religion.

Nymph. Now that you speake of being too forward and precise in matters of religion, it putterh me in minde of a saying of Salomons, which I well vnderstand not. Be not thou (aith he) iust ouermuch^h. It may seeme to agree with their opinion, which would not haue men to be too strait, as they call it.

Epaph. It is a good rule of the learned, that for the finding out the true meaning

^f Jer. 15. 16.

^z Rom. 1. 16.

^u Ioh. 7. 48.
Maior pars
vincit melio-
rem

^x Exod. 32.

^y Math. 27.

^z 1 King. 18.

Aug. Plal. 128.

ἐν πλῑθει τῶν
ἐκκλησιαστικῶν
πρῶτον.

Nazian.

^a Luk. 12. 32.

^b Math. 26. 33.

^c Phil. 3. 13.

Non quid e-
geris, sed quid
superfit curan-
dum: si dixisti
sufficit, defe-
cisti.

^d Math. 25. 29.

^e Luk. 8. 18.

Vbi incipis
nolle fieri me-
lior, ibi definit
esse bonus.

^f 1. Pet. 2. 2.

^h Vers. 3.

^h Eccl. 7. 18.
Augustin. de
doct. Christ.
lib. 2. cap. 6.

meaning of a place of Scripture, we must consider what goeth before, & what followeth; this rule obserued will soone cleare this place. In the verse going before Salomon had spoken of the confusion (as may seeme) which is in the world: *There is (saith he) a iust man that perisbeth in his iustice, and there is a wicked man that continueth long in his malice*¹. Now to repress the rash headinesse of mans disposition, which is readie to censure Gods courses at pleasure, the wise man addeth this, *Be not thou iust ouermuch*: that is, Beware thou take not vpon thee, vnder pretence of iustice, to charge these courses of Gods prouidence with iniustice. It was an error we know, that *Dauid* by his owne confession had well-neare fallen into^k. And *Jeremie* the Prophet craued leaue of God that hee might talke with him of his iudgement^l: he could hardly at the first satisfie himselfe in it, how God could be iust, and yet suffer them to be in wealth that rebelliously transgresse. This taxing of Gods proceedings in the gouerning of the world, is (I take it) chiefly forbidden in this precept, *Be not iust ouermuch*: and this to my seeming is the meaning of that place: howsoeuer it bee taken (as I know some otherwise interpret it) yet I am sure it condemneth not that warie and zealous course in the practise of Religion, which though the world is pleased to call ouer-holinesse, yet I am well aduised the Scripture vrgeth, bidding vs to walke circumspectly or exactly^m, and by a ruleⁿ, and to abstaine from all appearance of euill^o.

Nymp. The Lord in his mercy enable vs so to doe: for surely the wicked and vngodly, as they are bold in euill, so that the very triall of their countenance testifieth against them^p, so also they doe adde drunkennesse to thirst^q, labouring to grow to a kinde of perfection in vngodlinesse. And therefore great shame (shall it be for vs, who professe to know God^r, to waxe colde and faint hearted, and timorous in the duties of piety, and not to strine rather to goe from strength to strength^s, and to increase in holinesse, as fast as prophane godlesse men thrine in iniquity.

I haue hitherto (as farre as my experience in obseruing, and my memorie in recounting hath enabled mee) propounded vnto you the senerall obiections against preaching, urged ordinarily by three sorts of men; the grossely ignorant, the wretchedly prophane, and the worldly wise; and you haue (I thanke you) opened, vnto me the blindnesse of the first, the vilenesse of the second, and the vanitie of the last. The contentment that I haue receined by your discourse hitherto, maketh mee to presume further vpon you, and to request your patience in hearing, and your skill in resolving some exceptions made by a fourth sort of men: last in order, but not least in argument, because they are by education learned, and by profession (some of them) Ministers and Preachers, and yet doe not altogether fauour those courses of preaching, which some doe magnifie so exceedingly.

Epaph. Neighbour (to say nothing of my dutie) I am bound by my promise to endeauour to satisfie you: and howsoeuer I am of *Hieroms* minde, and am vnwilling to oppose my selfe against any learned men of mine owne profession, lest I should seeme desirous of contention: yet because the truth is to be preferred before all other respects, and to *gine titles*^u is a thing so dangerous, therefore I will forget all things which might hinder me in free speaking that which in my conscience I am verily perswaded is the truth, and will set before me onely the glory of God, and the common good and benefite of his Church.

Nymph. Beeing then assured of your readinesse, I will tell you what I haue marked partly out of the speeches, partly out of the sermons of some that are reputed learned men: I am no scholler, and therefore you must not expect any precise order at my hands: yet to my seeming their exceptions are either against preaching it selfe, or against the manner of it, as by some it is performed.

Epaph. Your Methode is good enough: But doe you know any professing the Ministry, which doe vtterly mislike and disallow preaching.

Z z 2

Nymph.

¹ Ver. 17.

^k Psal. 73.

^l Ier. 12. 1.

^m Eph. 5. 15.

ⁿ Axiom.

^o Gal. 6. 16.

^p 1. Thes. 5. 22

^q Isa. 3. 9.

^r Deut. 29. 19.

^s Titus 1. 16.

^t Psal. 84. 7.

Non audeo scribere contra Episcopum communionis meae. Hieronymus ad Aug. Plus omnibus & amanda & praefenda est veritas. Dyonis. Alex.

^u Iob. 32. 22. The exceptions of some seeming learned.

Nymphas. I doe not say so: for they who are the most eager in this matter, if you fall to reasoning with them, cannot for shame but say, That preaching is the most ordinary, and vsuall meanes which God useth to worke by in the hearts of the hearers: and againe, That preaching doth profite more then reading. And yet for all that in their ordinarie discourse they make knowne their opinion thus, that the word of God is as effectuall when it is read, as when it is preached, and that reading is preaching.

Epaph. Certainly I cannot but maruaile, that men of learning and professed Diuines, should vndertake the maintenance of such an opinion, yea though it were but for their credits sake: for put this case, that in the vacancy of an Ecclesiasticall preferment, there were ioynt suters for it, a man of note and quality, that hath spent many yeares in studie, and runne through the whole circle of sciences, and is graced also with degrees of schooles, (the testimony of his desert:) and another an ordinary fellow, that hath had but reasonable breeding, and no seasoning but in a countrey schoole, and therefore is able to doe little (perhaps) saue onely, reade faire, and go by his Rubricke: thinke you that your Vniuersitie scholler would not thinke himselfe greatly wronged, & grow into a marvellous discontentment if that other should bee preferred before him? yes doubtlesse he would renew that old complaint of *Salomons*, and say, *Folly is set in great excellency, I haue seene seruants on horses, and Princes walking as seruants on the ground*^x. He would say, it were enough for such a one as he, if hee were appointed to some lower office in the Church, where he might eate a morsell of bread y: and that if he were so well provided for, as was *Michah* his Leuite, with ten shekels of siluer by the yeare, and a sute of apparell, and his meate and drinke^z, surely then he were as well preferred as he deserueth. Like to these, would bee the priuy thoughts of a well deseruing scholler, beeing disappointed of his hoped preferment, by so vnworthy a competitor. And for mine owne part, I thinke him to haue very iust cause so to complaine. But yet this being held for a truth, that reading is as effectuall as preaching, and that an ordinary man may doe as much good, saue as many soules, draw as great a multitude to heauen with his distinct reading, as the other with all his Vniuersity learning and long laboured for Diuinity, surely then the scholler hath no reason to thinke himselfe wronged in missing his preferment: for why should there be a disparity in reward, where there is no great precedence in respect of the possibility to doe good in Gods Church? So that I say, me thinkes if it were for no other cause, yet men of learning and Preachers by profession, should neuer goe about to equall bare and naked reading vnto preaching.

^x Eccl. 10. 6. 7

^y 2. Sam. 2. 36.

^z Iudg. 17. 10.

Nymph. This may (perhaps) be some reason in policy: but I hope you haue some better prooffe then this for the matter: otherwise I know what the world will say, (euen that which it spareth not to speake already) that you Preachers are so earnest in the extolling of preaching onely for your owne private credits sake, that you may bee the better esteemed.

Epaph. God be thanked, variety of sufficient proofes is not wanting in this cause; but yet this I thought good to obserue, as it were by the way, to the end that men (who it may bee haue a good opinion of their owne well deseruing) may see what an inconuenience is like to follow by the defence of such an opinion.

Nymph. I am very desirous to heare what may be said in this case touching the comparison that is made betwixt reading and preaching, and therefore I doe euen long till you come vnto it.

Epaph. Well then (to cut off all preambles and vnecessary circumstances,) for this point touching the efficacie of preaching aboue reading, I will stand vpon two reasons chiefly: the one is experience, the other is Gods ordinance,

ordinance, who hath appointed the ability to preach, as a matter of necessity in every one that is called to the Ministry.

Experience is sometimes called the mistress of fooles, but by it in this point wise men may learne a good lesson: first of all, if there be a view taken of all the places and parishes where there hath beene onely reading, and of those which haue beene furnished with a settled preaching Minister, whose care hath beene to *deuide the word of truth aright*^a, the different estate of the places will soone make knowne the worth of preaching aboue reading: for looke into those who haue euer rested themselves satisfied with a reading Minister, neither seeking nor caring for better meanes of instruction, and you shall finde them generally to be woefully ignorant, lamentably blinde in the matters of God, altogether *children in vnderstanding*^b, popish, superstitious, heathenish, in one word (to speake with the Apostle) *Walking in the vanity of their minde, hauing their cogitation darkned, and being strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in the, because of the hardnesse of their hearts*^c. This is the generall condition of such persons. But looke againe to those, who haue beene taught in the word^d, and haue made conscience to profit by the good meanes wherewith God hath blessed them, there shall you see the *scale*^e of the Ministry, euen the conuersion of soules, comfortable knowledge and conscionable carriage, the Lords Sabbath sanctified, his word accounted pretious, the Sacraments reuerently vsed, private families trained vp in the instruction and information of the Lord^f, and euen a *very church in euery house*^g. I know indeede that there are many good people dwelling in parishes wanting preaching, and many ignorant and vngodly ones in places well furnished with teaching. For God sometimes caueth his word to be spoken to those *which will not heare, neither indeede will cease*^h: but yet let these circumstances noted by me bee remembered, of resting well enough satisfied with bare reading, and of reioycing in the benefit of an able preacher, and then it will be found true which I haue said, and be a sufficient testimony of the power of preaching aboue reading. Secondly, whereas the Scripture is a witnesse of the bad opinion which the world will haue of the ministry of the word, assuring them that are called to that office, that the faithfull discharge of their duty shall bee rewarded with *affliction*ⁱ, with *hatred*^k, with all manner of euill sayings^l; let any man examine his owne obseruation, and see in which of the two, the Reader or the Preacher, this is best verified. It is an old saying, that by the market folkes you shall vnderstand how the market goeth. Take mee therefore a common man whome you meet by chance, and question with him touching the place where he dwelleth, and about his minister; if he be but a Reader, you shall haue him say strait, Truly we haue a good honest quiet man, many indeed he cannot preach, but he liueth peaceably, and medleth with no man, and is very well beloued amongst vs: for why, he is a fellow like man, &c. but put case the Minister be a painfull preacher, one that seeketh to draw the people from their godlesse and superstitious courses, to the knowledge of God, then you shall heare him in another tune, he will say then, There we haue a man, some say he is learned, but sure I am he hath troubled vs all, a good many of vs wish he had neuer come amongst vs, we were all quiet before, but now all is out of frame, there is such reproouing and finding of fault, and bringing vp of new fashions and orders that we know not what to do, some of the best of our parish will do what they can to remoue him: these and the like are the thoughts and speeches of no small many, and the same no fooles in the eyes of the world, who do indeed iustifie preaching by condemning it^m. & shew it to be the power of God by resisting it. Thirdly, for one other specialty drawn frō experience: I will appeale vnto mens cōsciences, whether they be such as feare God or otherwise. They which feare God, & *treble at his words*ⁿ, & do in humility desire to know the Lords secrets^o, cannot but acknowledge, that they

^a 2. Tim. 2. 15.

^b 1. Cor. 14. 20

^c Eph. 4. 17.

^d Gal. 6. 6.

^e 1. Cor. 9. 2.

^f Eph. 6. 4.

^g Philem. 2.

^h Eze. 2. 7.

ⁱ 2. Tim. 2. 3.

^k Ioh. 16. 33.

^l Ioh. 15. 19.

^l Math. 5. 11.

^m Act. 13. 27

ⁿ Ifa. 66. 2.

^o Psal. 25. 14.

† Titus 1. 1.
‡ 2. Tim. 3. 5.

Cic. de Orat.
lib. 1.

† Heb. 4. 12.

† Act. 15. 21.
† Act. 17. 15.
A. 17. 16. 15.
‡ Luk. 4. 16.
Bucerypon
Eph. cap 4.
The vse of
reading the
Scrip. in the
Church,

they do much more increase both in the knowledge of the truth which is according to godlinesse^p, and in the power of godlinesse^a, doe finde their iudgements better strengthned, their faith more confirmed, their consciences more wrought vpon, & their affections more quickened by the word, when it is effectually preached and applyed, then when it is but only read vnto them. And no maruel, for indeed it cannot be, that a briefe clause of holy Scripture, wherein in a short tenour of words (such is the riches of the sacred text) many particulars are comprised, beeing onely read, should profit so much, as if by preaching it were expounded, & according to occasions, applyed vnto Gods people. If a man (saith the heathen Orator) come into a wardrope, where many rich garments are folded vp together in a narrow roome, it cannot so satisfie him, as if the same might severally be laid forth to his view, time being graunted to take notice of every particular: because being lapped vp, he cannot see the whole beauty, & being together he is not able to obserue euery specialty: euen so it fareth with the Scriptures: if a man heare them read, it cannot but draw him to admire the maiesty & riches of them, & it wil cast some glimmering light vpon the vnderstanding: but when he heareth them laid open by preaching, it will much more astonish him, it will euen rauish him as it were, casting a cleerer light vpon his iudgement, and working more mightily vpon his affections. This truth, all which truly feare God are able to iustifie out of their owne experience. Now for others, I know they also must yeeld to this, that they finde the word beeing vrged and pressed by preaching, to be far more powerfull, more piercing, more maiestically, more awaking the conscience, more entering through, euen vnto the diuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, more discerning the thoughts and the intents of the heart: and this is my first reason fetched from experience, against which there can be no disputing: for it is in vaine to go about to perswade a man that that thing is not so, which he by observation hath still found to be so.

Nymph. I haue well marked your speech, & duly considered the course of your argument: and as I am well strengthened by it in that good opinion which I haue alwaies had of preaching, so I am glad of one thing which I obserued in your discourse, namely, that you seeme not altogether to condemne reading, nor to desire the banishing of it out of the Church. I can tell you, it is commonly said, that you and others such as you are, doe mislike the reading of the Scriptures.

Epaph. God forbid that I or any man should hold so grosse an errour, as to condemne a course of that antiquity: Moses was read in the Synagogue euery Sabbath day: and there was the Lecture of the Law and Prophets. And our Sauour Christ comming into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, stood vp to read. And for mine owne part, I agree to the opinion of a learned man of our later times, that reading of the holy Scriptures in the congregation is good, to that end, that the phrase and manner of speaking of the Scripture, and the Scripture it selfe might be more knowne and more familiar to the people: and I confesse also with him, that by that meanes the iudgement of the people is confirmed in all points of religion, so that thereby they are made able to iudge of the interpretation of the Scriptures, and of the doctrine taught them by their owne teachers or others: all this I willingly acknowledge. And howsoeuer men are disposed to interpret it, yet that which is spoken in the praise of preaching, tendeth rather to the countenancing then to the disgrace of reading: for he who obserueth it shall finde, that none in private examine the Scripture more carefully, none in publike heare it read more respectiue, then those whom preaching hath taught to see the excellency of Gods word, & the worth of the Scripture.

Nymph. You haue done very well to make knowne your iudgement touching the reading of the Scripture: for the conceit, that you thinke basely of the word read, is a great prejudice to you in many places, and in many mens opinions. If it please you, come now I pray you to your second reason.

Epaph.

Epaph. The second reason which I have for the maintaining the efficacy of preaching about reading, is grounded vpon the ability to preach, which the Lord requireth in every Minister. For this being taken for granted, that the Lord would both in the riches of his loue, and the depth of his wisdom set down that course which should be most for the behoofe of his Church: it must needes follow, that if he haue not thought it sufficient for a Minister to be able to reade, but to performe some further duty of instructing, then surely there is something more in preaching then in reading, and more profit like to follow by opening the text, then by bare propounding it.

Nymph. Your reason is good, if you be able to prooue it; for it seemeth to some a hard doctrine, to say, that God requireth euery Minister in the Church to be able to preach, and therefore I wish you may be able to make it good.

Epaph. How hard soeuer and incredible it may seeme to some, yet I doubt not but to prooue it, especially if wee will be content to stand to the iudgement of the Scripture, and so that sure word, as S. Peter calleth it^x; endeavouring by a reuerent kinde of examination, to search out the secret and hidden meaning of Gods Spirit. And first of all, I will place in the front as it were of this prooffe, that worthy place in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romanes; *How shall they beleue in him of whome they haue not heard, and how shall they heare without a Preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?* The summe of the place, is this: that the hearing of a Preacher which is sent, is the ordinary meanes ordained of God to beget faith. From thence ariseth another point: that hee whose ministry must be the meanes and instrument to beget faith, must bee a man sent; for, *How can they preach except they be sent?* onely that man is a preacher, which is sent. Now if we shall examine what it is to bee sent, it will appeare to bee true, that a sufficient Minister to call Gods people, must bee a man of better quality then a bare reader of the Scripture. To bee sent therefore is this, to be appointed and deputed of God, and (as the Lord speaketh of *Jeremie*) *sanctified*; or (as *Paul* saith of himselfe,) *put apart to that seruice*^z. Were it not now a presumptuous and ouer-bolde imputation of a certaine dissolute carelesnes vnto the wisest and most prouident God, to say or thinke that he would put any man in his seruice^a, for the worke of the Ministry^b, vnlesse the same were so gifted and qualified, as is meet for the discharge of so weighty a businesse? *Salomon* saith, that *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a foole,* (that is, of a man vnable to deliuer the tenor of his message, and to open it to him to whom it is sent,) *is as he that cutteth off the feet*^c. It is as if hee should bid a man goe, and yet chop off his feet wherewith he should trauell. A Prince purposing an ambassage to another Prince, thinketh it not enough that the man whome he will employ in that seruice, be able to cary his errand written in a paper, and faithfully to deliuer it according to directions (for that euery ordinary Currer and common Post may doe,) but hee maketh choise of one that hath had the best breeding, a man of good vnderstanding, of good discourse, of good behaviour, and of no lesse discretion, who is in these respects able to debate & manage those great affaires, as may be most for the behoofe and honourable advantage of him that sendeth him. Shall we thinke God to be lesse carefull for the businesse of his Church, then earthly Princes be for their State causes? Shall a man of the best quality bee sought out for the carying of a message from one man to another? and shall one of the meanest sufficiency haue the ministry of reconciliation betwixt God and man giuen vnto him^d? God forbid. Let all these things then be put together: First, that he whose Ministry shall be the meanes to breed faith, is a man sent, which the text auoucheth. Secondly, that to be sent, is to be gifted in that measure, as is agreeing to the weight of so great a calling, which common sense will not suffer vs to deny. Thirdly, that to be able only to reade the Scripture, is a common gift, and a faculty of no great note,

in de. p. m. v. s. o. r.
in de. p. m. v. s. o. r.
Bal. epist.
ad Eust. medi.
x 2. Pet. 1. 19.
Bal. epist. 2. 19.
Epip. h. 2. 76.
N. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
Basil de spiri.
tu sancto cap. 1.
The opening
of the place,
Rom. 10. 14.

1 Jerem. 1. 5.
d. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
z Rom. 1. 1.

a 1. Tim. 1. 12.
b Ephel. 4. 12.

c Prom. 26. 6.

d 2. Cor. 5. 18.

which every man well knoweth; Let these things (I say) be put together, and
 ° Eccleſ. 4. 12. you shall finde them as a *threefold cord, not easily broken*^c, binding vp and streng-
 thening this truth, that the man not graced with any more then the power to
 reade, is not the Minister appointed by God for the working of faith in the
 hearts of his people. Againe, to preſſe this place yet further, this is the con-
 ſtant doctrine of the Scripture, that no Minister can haue comfort in the day
 of the Lord, but onely hee which is able to ſay with *Jeremie*, *I haue not thruſt my*
 f Jerem. 17. 16 *ſelfe in for a Paſtor*^f. For woe ſhall be vnto thoſe of whom the Lord ſhall ſay, *I*
 g Jerem 23. 21 *haue not ſent theſe Prophets, and yet they ran*^g. So that it ſtandeth every man vp-
 h 1. Tim. 3. 2. on, who *deſireth that worthy worke, the office of an ouer-ſeer*^h in Gods Church, to be
 well affured of his calling, leſt in the day of ſuruey it bee ſaid vnto him, as was
 ſaid vnto the gueſt without the wedding garment; *Friend, how cameſt thou hi-*
 ther? Or as to the wicked in the *Psalme*; *What haſt thou to doe to declare mine*
 i Mat. 22. 12. *ordinances, that thou ſhouldeſt take my covenant in thy mouth*^k? Now, by what means
 k Psal. 50. 16. can a man know himſelfe to bee ſent and called of God to the ſeruiſe of his
 Church? there is no reuelation to bee looked for, neither is it to bee expected
 that God ſhould call by ſome immediate voice, as hee did the Prophets, or as
 he did *Paul*^l: and yet there is a meane and courſe as certaine herein, as if the
 l Aſ. 9. Lord ſhould ſay directly by a voice ſounding in our eares, *God, beholde, haue not I*
ſent thee? It is in this matter, as it is in that of election. A man that is carefull
 m 2. Pet. 1. 10. (according to the rule of the holy Ghoſt) *to make his calling and election ſure*^m,
 muſt not preſume to ſearch the vnſearchable counſels of God, neither yet
 waite for ſome ſpeciall intelligence from heauen; but hee muſt enter into
 his owne heart, and riſe vp by degrees from the fruites of ſanctification
 to his beeing iuſtified, from iuſtification to his effectuall calling, from thence
 to election, and from all theſe, conclude eternall glorification in Gods king-
 dome: this is a ſure courſe, to bee led by the ſtreames vp to the wel-head.
 Not much vnlike is the courſe in iudging of a mans calling to the Ministe-
 ry. I may in ſome ſort apply the ſpeech of *Paul* in another caſe to this pur-
 poſe: *Say not thou that affecteſt the Miniſtery, Who ſhall aſcend vp into heauen,*
 to aſſure me what is Gods purpoſe touching me? for there is another way, *The*
 n Rom. 10. 6. *teſtimony of thy being ſent (if thou art ſent) is neere thee, euen in thy mouth, and in*
 o 2. Cor. 3. 6. *thy heart*ⁿ. Inquirie muſt bee made by a man in this behalfe, in what meaſure
 God hath *ſitted him*^o to be a Minister of the new Teſtament. Now may a man
 with a ſafe conſcience, or with any good ground make himſelfe beleue that
 God hath ſent him, and called him to the Miniſtery, becauſe he is able to reade
 diſtinctly the text of holy Scripture? Can this one faculty bee a ſufficient teſti-
 mony to a mans owne ſoule, that he is one of the appointed labourers for Gods
 harneſt? Shall a man aduenture to vndertake the cure and care of ſoules vpon
 ſo ſlender preparatiō? Surely (for as much as I can cōceiue) the doctrine of the
 Scripture, deſcribing the office of a Minister, is againſt it. This vſe I haue made
 of this place: the ſumme is this: the ordinary meane to beget faith, is the hea-
 ring of a Preacher ſent, that is ſo furniſhed with gifts ſutable to his calling, that
 both in reſpect of the tenor of his meſſage, and his ability *to manifeſt the riches*
 q Colleſſ. 1. 27. *of the glorious myſtery of Chriſt*^q, his very ſee may deſerue to be called *beautiful*:
 r Rom. 10. 15. but neither is bare reading to bee numbred among thoſe gifts which might ar-
 gue a man to be ſent, neither is it ſafe for any man to aduenture vpon no better
 ſufficiency: Therefore there is more required in him, who muſt bee heard for
 the breeding of faith, then the naked faculty of deliuering to the people out of
 a booke, the letter of the Scripture.

*Nymph. But by your leaue ſir, that which you ſpeake touching ſending, I feare me
 how it will be well taken: for hath not the Church the power of ſending and calling to the
 Miniſtery? If then a man able onely to reade the Scripture, be by the Church appointed
 to that office, is not that a ſufficient warrant to him in this caſe?*

Epaph.

Epaph. The calling by the Church, I acknowledge to bee so necessary, that without it (a settled forme of Church government being established) no man is to be reputed a lawfull Minister, though he be otherwise of neuer so great sufficiency. God (I know) calleth men extraordinarily sometimes, as namely, in the first founding and planting of the Church: (so were the Apostles and Evangelists called:) and when the Church of God is defaced, and an vniuersall Apostasie spread over it; (so it is thought they were called, who restored the sincerity of religion, after the long night of Popery.) But this extraordinary kinde of calling neuer taketh place, but when ordinary calling faileth. Now though the calling and allowance of the Church is necessary, yet it is not sufficient to the being of a Minister. The office of the Church is onely to approoue, it is God that maketh a Minister. And therefore the Church is tyed to a law, to lay hands *sodainly upon no man*^f, but to *prooue first*^g, and to vse a very precise examination before they separate any man to the office of a Minister. The Churches duty is to search out what men the Lord hath *chosen, to take a part in the ministratio*^h. I know there may be an error committed herein, & men in their choices and elections, may be deceived. It saith many times with the Gouvernours of the Church, as it did with *Ioab* in the campe^x. When *Abolom* was slaine, and the army of those which ioyned with him in the conspiracie, was ouerthrowne, *Ioab* was purposed by a messenger to informe *Dauid* of the successe of the battell: hereupon one *Abimaaz* offered himselfe to be the carier of tydings: *Ioab* put him backe, taking another, one *Cushi* to be the fitter for that seruice. *Abimaaz* notwithstanding continued to importune *Ioab*, *What (I pray thee) if I run also after Cushi?* And againe, *Yet what if I run?* And neuer left vntill he had obtained licence to run also. Hauing gotten this leaue to run, hee ran by the way of the plaine, and ouer-went *Cushi*, and came first to *Dauid*, and made wise, as if he could haue tolde great tydings. But when the King came to particulars, then he was silent, *I sawe a great tumult, but I knew not what.* The case so standeth many times in the Church. The spirituall *Ioabs*, the leaders of Gods people, intend (perhaps) to send none but *Cushies*, men of whose faithfulness and sufficiency, they haue good experience: but yet haply some *Abimaaz* or other, some that might wel stay to *bear tydings another time*, steppeth in, and putteth forward himself, and by importunity purchaseth that which otherwise desert could not obtaine, and so runneth by the way of the plaine (that common and too much troden path of Symony,) and ouer-goeth the worthier; and being first come into the face of Gods Church, seemeth to be able to bring out of *his treasure, things both olde and new*^z. But if you growe with him into particulars, you shall finde him like the guest in the Gospell, euen *speechlesse*^a, so that hee must bee faine to stand aside till *Cushi* commeth to resolue you. Thus I say an error may happen, and an ouer-sight may be committed euen by the best *ouer-seers*. But when this negligence becommeth a custome, and it waxeth an ordinary matter, to make of the lowest of the people, *Priests of the high places*^b, so that in a manner *who will may consecrate himselfe*; then a man may well cry with *Dauid*, *It is time for thee Lord to worke*^c: *Arise, O God, and lift up thine hand*^d. And how fearefull a thing it is, for those which willingly suffer it, may appeare by an example not much vnlike. God sent *Samuel*^e to annoint one of *Israh* his sonnes, to bee King over Israel: *Samuel* seeing *Eliab*, because of his countenance, and the height of his stature, said, *Surely the Lords annointed is before him*. The like conceipt had he of the rest of his brethren: but yet he receiued still a secret information, *The Lord hath chosen none of these*. Put case that *Samuel* notwithstanding this direction giuen him, had tooke the horne of oyle, and annointed some other beside *Dauid*, had it not beene great contempt to haue proceeded contrary to commaund? So in this case, they to whom the office and function of laying on of handes belongeth in Gods Church, when the Lord shall say expressly in his word, I haue

^f 1 Tim. 5. 22.

^g 1 Tim. 3. 10.

^h λαβειν & κληρον.

^u Act. 1. 25.

^x 2 Sam. 18.

^z 2 Sam. 18.

^y Heb. 13. 7.

^z Math. 13. 52.

^a Math. 22. 12.

^b 1 Kin. 13. 33.

^c Psa. 119. 126

^d Plal. 10. 12.

^e 1 Sam. 16.

haue not chosen this man, he is not gifted for this weighty businesse: if they for all that shall giue the outward allowance of a Minister to him, whome in their certaine knowledge God hath not graced with gifts sufficient for the calling of a Minister, what punishment in all likelihood this rashnesse is liable vnto, I leaue it to every mans conscience that feareth God to examine. And I pray God giue them whom it concerneth hearts to consider it.

Nymph. I ioyne with you in your good desire: and yet perhaps men of place may pleade a kinde of necessity, to admit men of no better sufficiency, there being not that store of learned men and Preachers, to furnish euery seuerall congregation.

Epaph. What is to bee borne withall in cases of ineuitable necessity, is one thing, and what is to be permitted when the good meanes is not wanting, is another thing: for this our land, first I thinke there was neuer any triall taken, whether the number of learned men were proportionable to the tale of seuerall parishes: Secondly, the Vniuersities are like to the market place, in which stand many of good quality, of whom if you demaund *Why stand you here?* they will answer, *Because no man hath hired vs.* And the seuerall Colledges, bee (as it is said of the teeth of the spouse) *like a flocke of sheepe in good order, which go vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twins, and none is barren among them.* Thirdly, the Scripture telleth vs, that *Christ ascended vp on high to giue gifts vnto men:* why then should wee thinke his hand so shortned, as that it should bee deemed vnpossible to furnish this whole Church with preaching Ministers? Fourthly, if that be true which some say, that there are more learned men in England, then in all the reformed Churches of Europe besides, then there is no cause to plead any such necessity. And therefore I account that as a colour rather then any argument.

Nymph. I feare me sir, I haue too much interrupted you: I pray you therefore proceed in your prooffe of this point, that there is a necessity layed upon euery Minister that shall vndertake the cure of soules, to bee able to doe more then barely to reade the holy Scriptures vnto the people.

Epaph. The next reason which I haue to strengthen this principle, is grounded vpon this, because I finde by the Scripture, that it is a matter of very great difficulty to be a good Minister. There are two things principally required in a Minister: the one, that he be able to exhort with wholesome doctrine: the other, that he haue skill to improoue them that say against it. Where to agreeth that saying of *Augustine*, that *He must be a maintainer of truth, and a withstander of error.* For which cause the spirituall builders in Gods building^k, which is the Church, are not vnfitly compared to those who builded the Temple in *Nehemias* his time, who did the worke with the one hand, and with the other held the sword^l. It is a shame for a Minister, if it shall fall out with his spirituall worke, as *Tobias* the Ammonite said in scorne of the re-edified Citty and Temple by the Iewes, *Although they builde, yet if a Foxe goe vp, he shall ouer breake downe their stony wall.*^m So, I say, it shall be a blemish to a teacher in Gods Church, if he shall builde so weakely that those Foxes, those little Foxesⁿ, (of whom the Spouse complaineth) shall be able by and by to breake downe the building. Well then, let any man consider either of these two, and tell me whether it be not a matter of very great difficulty in any good measure to performe it. The Prophet *Isay* saith, that *the Lord had giuen him a tongue of the learned*, for that one peece of seruice, that he might know to minister a word in time to him that is wearie^o: and yet this is but one branch of a Ministers office. If we shall adde to it other particulars, such as are wisdom in admonishing, courage in reproouing, soundnesse in opening the treasure of the holy text, discretion in applying according to times and persons, with the like, which are required of euery Minister in his place: then we cannot but yeelde that he had need to be able to doe something more then reade, who shall seeke to behaue himselfe in the house of God as he ought to doe.

^f Mat. 20. 6, 7.

^g Cant. 4. 2.

^h Ephes. 4. 8.

ⁱ Titus 2. 9.
Veritatis pro-
pugnator, &
erroris expug-
nator. Aug. de
Doctr. Chr. 1.

4. cap. 4

^k 1. Cor. 3. 9.

^l Nehem. 4. 17

^m Nehem. 4. 3.

ⁿ Cant. 2. 15.

^o Isay 50. 4.

^p 1. Tim. 3. 15.

doe. Now for that other part, which standeth in stopping the mouthes of vaine talkers, and detainers of mens minds, which oppose themselves against Gods truth: it is (as *Augustine* well saith) a matter requiring more painefull and plentiful learning, as shall appeare to him that shall consider either the multitude of false opinions, or the quality of those which doe defend them. For the multitude, this is a cleare case, that whereas every former age hath brought forth some one or moe, to the disturbance of the peace of Gods Church, and to the exercising of the best learned that each time could afford, all these are flowne together into this last age, as into a common sewer. So that there is not any error which the former times knewe, and withall condemned to the pit of hell, but this our age hath raked it vp againe, and set (as it were) a new glosse vpon it, & made it by addition much more dangerous. Besides, we haue Popery, which is a fardle of Heresies, and the very compound of all the rest. Now for the quality of those which are the Patroners thereof, (of Popery especially) it is well knowne that though they haue among them, as it was said of old, many wooden Priests, all whose learning hangeth at their girdle in their Portuis, yet they which in these our times haue put forth themselves to support the drouping & decaying kingdome of Antichrist, are no punies, but many of them men of excellent wits, deep learning, & vnwearied industry: by their writings, and books, and disputations, making good the saying of our Sauour Christ, *The Children of this world are in their generation wiser then the Children of light*. Now then to discover the force of my intended reason, I draw it to these heads: first, I know that whosoever should vndertake out of the Scripture to describe the office of a Pastor, hee cannot without a palpable betraying of the truth, leaue out these two thinges which I haue named, the ability to teach the obedient Children of the Church, and the skill to oppose himselfe against the enemies of the church. Secondly, this I know also, that he that shall either by discourse examine, or by personall experience trie the difficultie of well performing these duties, will say with *S. Paul*, *Who is sufficient for these thinges*? and acknowledge with *Bernard*, that the Ministry is a burden, which the Angels themselves may well tremble at. Thirdly, I am as cleere in this, as in any of the two former, that there is no such difficultie in the faculty of reading, which as it is the first step to learning, so it is of all other things (incident to a scholler) the most easie. So that, seeing to hold opinion, that an onely reading Minister is a sufficient Minister, maketh that calling of all other, the most easie, which in it owne nature, as it is described to vs in the Scripture, is the most laborious, requiring so studious preparation to it, and so great intention and diligence in the performance of it, I must needs settle my selfe vpon this point, and perswade others also to it, that there is more required in a Minister of the new Testament, then to reade the Scripture, though I still holde that a part of his duty, and (as I haue said before) a matter very behouefull for the spirituall benefite of Gods Church.

Nymph. I could easily agree to that which you haue said, onely this doubt somthing stayeth me: if you holde no man a full Minister, except the same be able to preach, what shall we thinke then of the Sacraments administered by such; how can they be true Sacraments, if such be no true Ministers?

Epaph. For answer to that doubt, first this is a true and a received rule, that a Sacrament is not to bee esteemed by the hand of him which administred it: neither doth the dignity of the deliuerer, adde worth to the Sacrament, nor the indignity lessen the true nature of it. Secondly, he which hath an outward calling by the Church, though haply hee be vnworthy and vnmeet for the place whereto he is called, yet hee is to bee reputed as more then a private man: and therefore because by the appointment of the Church hee stands in the roome of a right and lawfull Minister, if there be no fault in the substance of the action of administering, the Sacraments are true Sacraments, though the party executing

Tit. 1. 10, 11.
Operosioris
vberiorque
doctrinae.
Aug. in Ench.
ad Laur.

Lignei Sa-
cerdotes.
Boniface,

Luk. 16. 8.

fric opes tanta
ingris, 2. Cor.
2. 16.
Onus est vel
ipsis Ang. for-
mitandum
Bern.

Calu. Inst. lib.
4. c. 15, sect. 16.

Paul was a
Pharisee, and
yet of the tribe
of Benjamin,
Phil. 3. 5. and
so was his fa-
ther too, Act.
23. 6. Gene-
brard in
Chronogra. l.
2. saith, that
the Scribes
were lightly
of the tribe of
Symeon.

¹ Mat. 23. 2, 3.

Epist. 263.

Theod. l. 1. c. 6

^u Isay 8. 20.

^z Deut. 33. 10.

^y Malac. 2. 7.

^z Deut. 6. 7.

^a Nehem. 8. 8.

Suidas in dic-
tione ¹ *noet*.

^b Luke 4. 16.

^c Act. 13. 15.

^d Act. 15. 21.

executing that office bee not altogether so allowable. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were the Doctors of the lawes, many of them were of other tribes then of the tribe of *Leui*, and crept in by corruption and bribery into those places, and were of vnsound iudgement in many things, as may easily bee gathered by the story of the Gospel; yet our Sauour willed his Disciples to heare them, because they sate in *Moses chairs*¹. Their entrance was naught, yet their Ministry was to be esteemed, so long as they failed not in the substance thereof. And this (I thinke) may resolute you for that matter.

Nymph. I will rest satisfied with this answer, till I shall finde either by mine owne private meditation, or by conference with others (better skilled in these points then I) what further to reply. I desire to heare you yet further in this matter, touching the necessity of preaching in a Minister.

Epaph. I am very willing to proceed, onely I would haue you to remember what I said at my first entrance into this matter: namely, that I would stand on-ly vpon proofes of Scripture. *S. Augustine* saith, that that was the auncient order of disputing, to haue the bookes of holy Scripture by, and to stand to the triall thereof. And therefore it was an excellent and memorable course of *Constantine* the Emperour, who commaunded the Fathers met together in the Councell of Nice, to referre that great controuersie then in hand, touching the Godhead of Christ, to the decilion of the Scripture. And it is Gods owne voice that we should *to the law, and to the testimony*^u. Wherefore wishing you to looke for no proofes from me, but such as are fetched out of the Scripture, I set this downe as my third reason, that whereas the Lord made very good prouisi-on for the maintenance of those who were to minister about holy things, I finde not either in the olde or new Testament, that any were provided for by such al-lowance, but onely such as were able to instruct the people by opening and ex-pounding the law. The office of the Levites in the olde law, stood vpon two things, one was to put incense before the Lords face, & the burnt offering vpon his altar: therin they were the peoples mouth vnto God: the other was to teach *Iacob Gods indgement, and Israel his Law*^z: in that they were Gods mouth vnto the people: for this cause it was the ordinance of God (aecording as I noted to you the place in the beginning of this conference,) that *the Priests lips should preserve know-ledge, and they should seeke the Law at his mouth*: for (saith the text) *hee is the mes-senger of the Lord of hosts*^y: that is, one appointed to bee the opener and declarer of the will of God among the people. And lest any man should thinke, that the law which the people were to seeke at the Priests mouth, was nothing but the bare letter and written text of the law, we may remember first, that the peo-ple had the free vse of the law in their priuate houses^z, so that they had no such neede to seeke that at the Priests hands. Secondly, that it was the vse of the Le-uities when they did reade in the booke of the law, to *give the sense also, & to cause the people to vnderstand the reading*^a, And hence it was, that when our Sauour Christ stood vnto reade on the Sabbath day, (aecording to his office, as some think that he was chosen one of the ordinary two and twenty Priests of the Temple,) when hee had closed the booke, the eyes of all that were in the Synagogue were fastened on him^b: because it was the order that presently vpon the reading of the law, followed the exposition of the law. Thence also was it that *Paul and Barnabas* being at Antioch vpon a Sabbath day, *After the Lecture of the Law and the Pro-phets, the rulers of the Synagogue sent vnto them, to intreate them, that if they had a-ny word of exhortation, they would bee pleased to deliuer it*^c. This their request arose vpon the custome of ioyning still the opening and interpreting of the Law, with the publike reading thereof, whereto agreeth that saying of *Iames*^d, that *Moses was of olde time in euery cittie, both read and preached euery Sabbath day*. For albeit some thinke there is great strength in that place, to prooue reading to be preaching, *Moses (say they) was preached, in that he was read*; yet the true drift

drift of the place, is, to proue that *Moses* was preached, in as much as he is read, not because to reade *Moses* is to preach him, but because the constant course of the times was to ioyn preaching with reading; those which read *Moses* on the Sabbath daies in the Synagogues, did expound him also: So that the strength of the reason brought to proue that *Moses* was preached every Sabbath, standeth vpon the agreement which is supposed to be in nature betwixt reading & preaching, but vpon the perpetual connecting of those seruices in euery well-ordered congregatio. Thirdly, this may be noted also, that whereas the Lord threatened to refuse them, that they should bee no priests to him, who had refused knowledge, by that refusing of knowledge is to be vnderstood, both their ignorance in the doctrine of the law, & their negligence to informe the people in it: otherwise, to thinke that there was nothing reprov'd in the more, then an vnability to reade the law, were a very grosse conceit. And thus much to proue that for the times of the old testament, none had the allowance of Priests, but such as were able to instruct. Now for the times of the Gospel, *S. Paul* thus declares the continuance of the equity of that ancient law, that like as of old, *They which did minister about the holy things, did eat of the things of the Temple, & they which did wait at the altar, were partakers of the altar*; so also it is ordaind by the Lord, that they which preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel; none haue any right to live by the Gospel, that is, of the exhibition or salary of the Church, but those which preach the Gospel. If you demaund of me what it is to preach the Gospel, *Paul* shal resolve you elsewhere, namely, it is this, to labour in the word and doctrine; which whether it be not more then to reade, I refer it to any mans iudgment. *Chrysost.* saith, that these words require of a Minister, that he do preach & teach, & make Sermons: and the old rule of the law, which *Paul* applies to the purpose, requires so much, *Thou shalt not muzzle the oxes mouth that treades out the corne*. The ox which is allowed to eate of the corne, is not he only which treades on the corne, but which treades it out, that worketh it out of the husks, that it may be fit for mans vse. So he is to eate of the Churches maintenance, who is able to set Gods word (the spirituall food) before the people; not only in the eare (as it were) in the words & letter of the Scripture, but in the true sense & interpretation of it. It is an excellent saying of *S. Hierome*; Let vs not thinke (saith he) that the Gospel is in the words of the Scripture, but in the sense, not in the outward face, but in the marrow therof: and as *Basil* speaks, not in the sound of the aire, but in the power of the things meant. I would haue thee (saith *Tertullian*) exercise thy self to the sense of the matter, & not to the sound of the word. It is a rule among lawyers, that not the bare words is the law, but the meaning of the law. And in the Scripture, they are said to teach the law, which shew the sentence or substance & matter of the law. So the, he is a teacher allowed to live vpon the common charge, which treades out (as I may so speak, alluding to the similitude of the ox) the sense of the Scripture out of the letter of the Scripture: and staies not (as *Hierome* speaks in the fore-remembred place) in the leaues of words, but searcheth to the root of the vnderstanding therof. You may (if you wil) adde hereto that other place of *Paul* to this purpose; Let him that is taught in the word, make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods. He that wil haue a share in the peoples temporal goods, must let them receiue spiritual good from him. He who looks to eat of the milk of the flocke (that is, as it is expounded by *Augustine*, of that which is giuen by the people for their overseers sustenance,) must in equity afford them that which may be for the building vp of their soules in Christ Iesus: otherwise there is no proportion. And were it not that men did more affect pride then painfulness, the fat & the wooll of the flocke, then the feeding of the sheep; this doctrine wold neuer be gainsaid; we should not the haue that iust cause to lament the state of so many, whom we see scattered abroad as sheep hauing no shepheard: neither to complain with *Aug.* that there are many who reioice in the name of Pastors, but care not to fulfill the office of Pastors. Thus haue you my third reason, which though it hath bin stretcht out by a discourse something large, yet it may be reduced to this brief: Gods word prouiding a maintenance of honor

• Ho. 4. 6.

1. Cor. 9. 13.
1. Tim. 5. 17.

Vi prae-
dicet, doceat
& concio-
netur.
In com. r. c.
ad Galat. nō
in verbis sed
in sensu, nō
in superficie
sed in Me-
dulla.

Basil. lib. 2.
contra Eu-
nomium.

Tertul. ad-
uers. Prae-
sulum rei
non ad sonū
vocabuli.
Sēsus Legis
lex est non
nuda verba.
Deut. 17.

9. 10.
In sermonū
Foliis.

Ad radicē
rationis.

Galat. 6. 6.
ὁ κηρύττων
τοῦ κειμένου.

August. in l.
de Pastori-
bus.

Pastum ho-
minis quam
pastum oui-
um. Ber. ad
Euagr.

Eze. 34. 4.

Mat. 9. 36.
Sunt qui pa-
storum no-
mine gau-
dent, pasto-
rum autem

officium im-
plere nō vult.

In l. de
Pastoribus.

1. Tim. 5. 17.

for the Ministers of his Church, hath not given allowance to any to live by it, but only to men able to instruct by opening the Scripture, therefore there is more requisite in a Minister, then to be able to read the Scripture.

Nymph. You have so well and thoroughly justified me for this matter by these your three reasons, that I will not urge you further: only I shall pray you to teach me how to answer some exceptions, and presented reasons, some against the necessity of preaching, some for the sufficiency of reading.

Epaph. I am willing to follow you, seeing I dived into this matter for your sake: and if hereafter any doubt shall arise in your minde upon further reasoning, touching these things which have bin said, I hope God will afford you opportunity further to debate them. If you will therefore let me heare what you have heard pleaded by those which are of a different opinion, I doubt not but by the grace of Christ you shall finde the truth to be as it is well called; An eternall victory: and that (as that worthy Romane said sometime) though it be often too much withstood, yet it can never be cleane extinguished.

Nymph. It is said by some, that this opinion touching the necessity of expounding and opening the Scripture by preaching, doth derogate from the dignity of the Scripture, and doth seeme to favour the doctrine of Poperie, touching the obscurity and darknesse of the holy Writ, as though there were such necessity of a Teacher to come to the understanding of it.

Epaph. The answer to this is easie. Touching the Scriptures, God forbid but we should acknowledge that they are both in their owne nature light^m, & such also, which by the beames thereof *do give light unto the eyes*ⁿ. And it is true which S. Augustine saith, that all matters necessary to faith & manners, are to be found in those things which are set downe plainly in the Scripture: and therefore we doe both exhort to the reading of the Scriptures privately, and commend the publike rehearsing of them in the congregation. Yet this is no whit contrary to the opinion touching the necessity of preaching. And so much shall evidently appeare, if we marshall our hearers into three companies. The first sort are grossely ignorant, and extremely negligent in the matters of God. The second are of some better both care to looke into the Scriptures, and capacity to conceive them. The third are as well able to sound out the truth by the private study of the Scripture, as those who bee professed Divines. There is no hearer (I meane among our people professing the present Religion,) but he belongs to one of these three ranks. Now for the former of these, preaching cannot but be most necessary: for as in their negligence of themselves they will never seek for knowledge, but it must even in a kinde of violence be put vpon them, so in their ignorance the plaine text read will profit them nothing, vnles with it be ioyned the skilfull industry of some painfull workman^o, who by framing himselfe to the shallow capacity of the silliest, & by adding precept to precept, line to line, here a little, & there a little^p, may drop in some knowledge, & through often sharpening^q of the necessary points of Religion, may make something to enter: neither doe we account preaching necessary for such, because of any darknes which we suppose to be in the Scripture, but because we know their cogitations to be darkened^r, & that they cannot perceiue the things of the Spirit of God^t. Preaching is not to put light to the Word, but to remooue the scales from their eyes, who, albeit the Scripture shine as bright as doth the Sunne at perfit day, yet vnlesse their sight bee holpen, bee not able to see the wonders of the Law^u. And what though (as I said) the Scripture *doe give light*, beeing the eye-salue ordained to that ende, yet there must bee a course by which to applie it to such an vse: And whether preaching bee not the course ordained of God to this worke, of plucking away that vail which is laid vpon every naturall heart^x, let that place testifie in which Pauls commission to preach the Gospell^y, is explained to bee, *to open the eyes of the Gentiles, that they may turne from darkenesse vnto light*^z.

Secondly,

Veritas aeterna
victoria Aug.
de ciu Dei, l. 2
c. 29.
Fab. max. apud
Liu. l. 22. saepe
laborare ni-
mis, nunquam
extingui.

^m Ps. 119, 105.
ⁿ Psalm, 119. 8.
Paula scribeth
to the word
both ^o light,
and ^o ~~perception~~,
enlightening:
2. Cor. 4. 6.
Aug. de doct.
Chr. l. 2. c. 2.
In iis quae a-
pertè posita
sunt.

^o 2. Tim. 2. 15.
Ad infantium
& lactentium
capacitatem
Aug. in Psal. 8.
^p Isay 28. 10.
^q Deut. 6. 7. a-
cutè ingeres:
Trem.
^r Ephes. 4. 18.
^t 1. Cor. 2. 14.
^u Psal. 119. 18.

^x 2. Cor. 3. 15.
^y Rom 1. 1.
^z Acts 26. 18.

Secondly, for the next sort which according to Christs commaundement *doe search the Scripture*^a, though I know they shall finde their spiritual hunger to be satisfied by many plaine & comfortable places, yet they shall many times be so plunged & set (as it were,) that they shall say with the Eunuch, *How can I understand, except I had a guide*^b? It is Gods wisdom, as wel to exercise vs with hard places, as to feed vs with those which are perspicuous, both to teach vs to pray with *David*, that the Lord would *open our eyes that we may see*^c, and withall to establish the necessity of the publike Ministry, & to teach vs humility, when we must be faine to depend vpon the instruction of others. As for the third kinde, who perhaps are able because of education in good letters, to search out the mystery of the text by their owne priuate industry, as well as the most sufficient Preacher, yet as I doubt not but the same shall euen better their iudgements by the meanest Sermon, (if that bee a fit tearme to bee giuen to a Sermon, in which Gods truth is soundly deliuered,) so I am sure they shall finde hearing to be very behoouefull, if it be for no other thing, yet (as a learned Father well obserueth it,) for their owne sluggishness, that so they may bee quickened vp to good duties, wee being all in nature so prone, though wee know much, yet to bee wearie of well doing^d, and to bee idle and vnfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord *Iesus Christ*^e. It is an excellent saying of the Apostle *Paul*, writing to the Romanes, and well fitting to this purpose: *I my selfe (saith hee) am perswaded of you my brethren, that ye are also full of goodnesse, and filled with all knowledge, and are able to admonish one another*^f: what greater commendation could bee? these men might seeme not to need any further instruction: but marke what followes, *Neuertheless brethren, I haue somewhat boldly after a sort written vnto you, as one that putteth you in remembrance, through the grace that is giuen me of God*. Though a man haue attained to neuer so great perfection in knowledge, yet he standeth still in need of a Preacher, though it be but to be a remembrancer vnto him. *Theophilus* was well instructed in the mystery of Christ, yet *Lukes* Gospel was needfull for him, that he might acknowledge the certainty of those things^g. Preaching is not superfluous, though a man were neuer so cunning. This briefe view of the state of our seuerall hearers, may serue to make this good, that to vrge the necessity of preaching as the meanes to beget faith, is no derogation to that doctrine which wee holde, touching the brightnes and plainnesse of the Scripture. The Scripture is as a light shining in a darke place^h, but neither doe all looke into it, neither can all that heare it read publikely, conceiue it, vnlesse they be prepared to it by some former familiar instructions, neither do all that peruse Gods Book, so fully vnderstand all, that they need no teacher, neither yet can any man, though of neuer so good parts, attaine to that fulnes, as that he shall not (at the least) stand in need of an admonisher. It is a good obseruation (in my iudgement,) of him, who saith, that the word is indeed light, but the preaching Minister is as the candlestickⁱ, of which Christ speakes, by which Gods Word giues light vnto all that are in the house. And indeed this similitude may haue the better approbation, if we note how by the candlestick^k which the Lord *Iesus* threatneth to remooue out of *Ephesus*, is meant especially the Ministry of the Word. God doth all things by means (ordinarily.) Christ is the true light, which giues light to them that sit in darknes^l, yet the faithful Ministers of seuerall congregations are said to be stars in his right hand^m, by which hee giues light vnto his Church. If this be true, I see not what inconuenience can follow vpon it, if we say, though the word be a lanterneⁿ, yet it then giues best, & clearest, & fullest light, when it is lifted vp as it were, and the brightnes thereof caused to spread forth into every corner, by the skill and paines of a sufficient Minister. Yet further, (if this do not satisfie,) you may consider thus much, that albeit the Scriptures were throughout so plaine and easie, that there were no need at all for any to haue a preacher to expound them, yet this is nothing against the necessity of Preaching. For the question is not sim-

^a Ioh 5.39.
Spiritus sanctus fami nostrae consulit in locis apertioribus. Aug. de doctr. Chr. lib. 2. c. 6.
^b Act 8.31.
Pascit manifestis, exercet occultis. Aug. tract. 45. in Io.
^c Psal. 119. 18.
Chrysostom. 44 in opere im. periceto in Math. v. alii essent Doct. alii discipuli, dicit tunc eximius. Chrysostom. 3. in. 2. Thes.
^d 2. Thes. 3. 13
^e 2. Pet. 1. 8.

^f Rom. 15. 14.

^g Luke 1. 4.

^h 2. Pet. 1. 19.

Wolf in Neh. esp. 8.

ⁱ Math. 5. 15.

^k Reuel. 2. 5.

^l Iohn 1. 9.

Luke 1. 79.

^m Reu. 1. 16. 20

ⁿ Ps. 119. 105.

ply, touching what may bring a man to the vnderstanding of the doctrine of religion, but, touching this, what is the ordinarie meanes ordained of God, to conuert, and to beget faith in the heart. It is possible for a man to vnderstand much, and to conceiue aright the meaning of the Scripture, and yet to remaine a reprobate still, and to want that faith, which for distinctions sake we call a *Sauing Faith*: Now in this lyeth the maine question, what is the ordinarie outward instrument sanctified of God to make a man a beleuer, and this I say still, is, *the word which we preach*, so that if at any time, any man (which I do not say is vnpossible) haue faith begotten in him either by his owne priuate reading, or by hearing another reade in publike, it is meere extraordinary.

o Rom. 10. 8.

Nymph. Another exception used by some, whose endeavour is to equall (if not to preferre) bare reading vnto preaching, is, that there is more certainty in the word read, then in that which you Preach: that which is read, men are sure is Gods word, but they haue not the like assurance of that which is preached, sermons (they say) are but mens Inuentions. Reading deliuereth the Word of God most simply and sincerely in its owne proper forme.

Epaph. If you desire a short and direct answer to this exception, take it thus. This allegation touching the certainty of the word read about the doctrine preached, is not true. There are in our congregations three sorts of people especially: first, ignorant persons: secondly, cauillers: and lastly, iudiciall and carefull hearers. The ignorant are as vncertaine touching that which we call the Scripture, whether it be the Word of God, as they be touching our preaching: they haue no assurance of it, but tradition and report, which is a poore certainty, & they haue as good an opiniō of the Apocripha bookes, as of the other which we call Canonickall. Besides that, it is buzzed into many of our common peoples eares, by whispering Papists, and it is thereby become ordinary in many mouthes here in the country, that our Bible is no true Bible, and that our translation is iustly to be doubted of. Secondly, those that are possessed with a humour of cauilling, may as well demand how they know the Scripture to bee Scripture, & those things to be true which are writtē in it, as how they may be resolved that our preaching is the truth. Thirdly, your best hearers which heare as Christ saith, *with a good and an honest heart*, to them the certainty of the truth in the written text and in the sermon is both alike: for, as they haue a certaine secret teaching by the Spirit of God (which *S. Iohn* calleth by the name of an *oyntment from him that is holy*) whereby they are perswaded of the truth of the Scripture, and doe account it *the oracle of God*, (in respect whereof they are said to be taught by God: and *Anstine* saith, God speaketh to our hearts:) so also they are enabled by the same spirit to iudge of that doctrine which they heare, by the Scripture, and equally to embrace points confirmed by it, and those which are expressely and in so many words revealed in it. So then there is no more certainty of the Text, then of the doctrine preached out of the text. Those which are ignorant, or disposed to caull, are doubtful of both alike, for the one are blockish and know nothing, the other are humorous & will be satisfied with nothing. Again, those which are Gods children, are alike assured of both: of the text, by the secret perswasion of Gods spirit: of the doctrine, by triall taken of it by the text. I remēber a saying of *S. Hieromes*, I know (saith he) that I otherwise esteeme of the Apostles, then of other treatisers: the Apostles I know spake alwaies the truth: the other as men in many things were deceiued. The speech may well be applied to this purpose: the books of holy Scripture we must yeeld consent vnto the without refusal, because it is certaine that they are all *given by inspiration of God*, so that there is nothing in the of any priuate motion: but as for the writings and preachings of men, they are not to be credited before they be tried whether they are of God. Thus much willingly is acknowledged: but yet after this trial made, & by the daily searching of the Scriptures, those things which

p Luk. 8. 15.

q 1 Ioh. 2. 20.
r Rom. 3. 2.
s 1. Theff. 4. 9.
Loquitur ad
cor vniuersum
que nostrum.
epist. 3.

Epist. 62. ad
Theoph. ca. 2.
Sine vllarecu-
satione. Aug.
de nat. & gra.
cap. 6.

t 2. Tim. 3. 16.
u 2. Pet. 1. 20

x 1. Iohn 4. 1.
y Act. 17. 11.

in

in preaching are deliuered are found to bee so; then the doctrines, though drawne out of the Text by the art and wit of man, and otherwise amplified, enlarged, and vrged by the helps of learning, are not to be called the opinions of a man, but the words of God^a. It is a good rule of the learned, that those points which are collected out of the Scripture, are of like authority with those which are directly written in it. When Paul beeing at Thessalonica went into the synagogue of the Iewes, and disputed with them by the Scriptures^a, I hope no man will say, but that those things which he by argument and discourse drew out of the written word, were of equall authority with points expressly mentioned. Paul pleading before Agrippa, stood stiffely to the iustifying of his doctrine, because he had said no other things but those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come^b. His doctrine was the same with the doctrine of Moses and the Prophets, yet not in words, but in sense and substance. And the same Apostle is not afraid to call his preaching The counsell of God^c, though it were in regard of the tenor and course of speech, differing from the expresse letter of the text. And he commends the Thessalonians, because they receiued of him the Word of preaching, not as the Word of men, but (as it is indeed) the Word of God^d. If it shall bee said vnto mee, that there is a difference betwixt our Sermons and Pauls, I willingly confesse it; but yet I say, that euen Pauls Sermons were subiect to the like triall that ours bee, as appeareth by the practise of the Noblemen of Berea^e. And therefore as his preaching was not to be esteemed as the word of God, till triall, and being tried, was equally to be reuerenced as the written Word it selfe: so neither are our sermons to bee by and by credited vpon our bare word, but to bee thoroughly examined: but beeing once found to holde at the touch-stone, then they are so to be reputed Gods word, that it may be safely said, He that despiseth them, despiseth not man, but God^f. And indeed vnlesse we shall giue equall credit and respect to matters soundly prooued by Scripture, and to points expressed in it, we shall hazard the truth of many, and the same no pettie principles of Religion, which I know are substantially confirmed by the Scripture, but yet are not word for word so to be found in the sacred text, as we maintaine them. I remember S. James giueth vnto that speech (The spirit that is in vs, lusteth after enuy) the title of Scripture^g: Who can shew me in what part of the Bible that is written: I confesse it may be iustified by those places of holy Writ, in which, the naturall corruption of mans heart is reported; but word for word, sure I am it cannot be found, which is a plain prooffe that it is not simply vnfitting to terme that (Gods Word,) which beeing by due collection deriued from it, yet is not expresse, & in the same forme of words, in which it is deliuered, written in it. As for that which is said, that reading deliuereth the Word of God in it owne proper forme, it is idle: for (to speake strictly,) that which is read in our Churches, is not Gods Word in it owne proper forme: The proper forme or shape (for in that obiection, the word forme signifieth so much) of the Scripture is the language in which it was first written: Now as it is true, that albeit the Hebrew and Greeke text of Scripture, bee simply better then our English, (because the writers of it had that infallible assistance of the holy Ghost, which our translators had not,) yet in respect of vs, and for our vse, the English is the better, because our vulgar people vnderstand it better; so, although the Word read doth come neerer to the native forme, and shape, and stile of Gods Word, then the Word preached, yet for our behoofe, the Word preached is the better, both because it furthereth our vnderstanding of the text, & especially (which is the chiefe thing) because it is Gods ordinance, by which to bring vs to beleue. And this I think may bee a sufficient answer to this obiection. Tell me I pray you, how you doe conceiue it.

Nymph. As farre as I can coniecture, your answer is this: that when that course of due triall (which is meete) is taken, touching things taught by preaching, then the Scrip-

^a 1. Pet. 4. 11.
^b Perinde sunt
 ea quæ ex
 Script. colli-
 guntur atque
 ea quæ scri-
 buntur.
 Naz. li. 5. de
 Theolog.
^c Act. 17. 2.
^d Act. 26. 22.
^e Act. 20. 27.

^f 1. Theff. 2. 13

^g Act. 17. 11.

^f 1. Theff. 4. 8.

αὐτὸ δὲ πνεῦμα καὶ κα-
 τὰ πρῆξιν.

ture being found to give allowance to them: there is as great assurance of the authority of the one, as of the other; and that is as much to be accounted the Word of God, which the Scripture warranteth, as that which by name in so many words it expresseth.

Epaph. That is indeed the summe of the answer: to which (if you will) you may adde this, that by preaching, men come to be better assured of the authority of the Scripture: for, the better they vnderstand it, the more comfort they finde in it, and the more they feele the power and working of it, (all which, by the blessing of God, are the effects of preaching,) the more are they assured that the Scripture is the very thing which it is said to be, even a perfect, pure, and sweet doctrine, converting the soule, reioycing the heart^h, and able to make a man wise unto salvationⁱ. It is truly said, that the Scripture standeth not in reading, but in vnderstanding. What shall it auaille men to cary a kinde of conceipt of some diuine authority to be in the Scripture, so long as they are ignorant of the mystery of it, and without any apprehension or taste of the comfort^k which is intended in it?

^h Psal. 119. 7, 8.
ⁱ 2. Tim. 3. 15.

Non in legendo, sed in intelligendo:
Hieron. contra Luc.

^k Rom. 15. 4.

Nymph. Yet (I pray sir) cleere one thing to me, that now (by the way) commeth into my minde: you will (methought) haue your Sermons to be called Gods Word; will it not follow from thence, that you that be preachers then, in your Sermons cannot erre; for, the Word of God cannot erre?

Epaph. It will not follow at all; as I will shew you by the like: wee will haue our translations of the Scripture out of Hebrew and Greeke into English, to be called Gods Word: doth it therefore follow that translators cannot erre? not at all. Again, weterme that which is read, the word of God; may it therefore be iustly concluded thence, that he which readeth the text to the people, in his reading cannot erre? surely no: some translators do translate amisse; some readers do read amisse; and some preachers do preach amisse; yet the Word translated is Gods Word, the Word read is Gods Word, and so also the Word preached is Gods Word. A particular erring in the cariage of the businelle, doth not hinder the giuing of the title of Gods Word vnto the generall course. Translations must be scanned; readings must be considered of; and Sermons must be examined. Gods Word cannot erre, but in the handling of Gods Word there may be a mistaking; and a difference must be put betwixt things mistaken, and things set downe aright: The text truly translated is the Word of God; the text truly read (being truly translated) is the Word of God; and so againe the text that is translated truly, and read truly, and then is opened, expounded, and applied truly, is the Word of God. Nothing, in what manner soeuer it is deliuered, is to be reputed and taken as the Word of God, without enquiry.

Nymph. But now (methinkes) you breede a new doubt, which although it bee not properly to the matter of our conference touching preaching, yet I must craue your helpe, because you seeme by resolving me of one scruple, to entangle me with another. By this which you haue said, I am become very vncertaine what to account Gods Word. For seeing (as you say) not the Word translated is more to be reputed the Word of God without enquiry, then the Word preached, how shall we doe that vnderstand no language but English, wee must trust to the translation which we haue, in which, in as much as there may be an error as well as in reading, or in preaching, how shall wee be sure that we haue the Word of God indeed?

Epaph. You doe not amisse to aske this; well it may make a doubt, and I know that the Papists doe much vrge this, to prooue that our common beleeuers can haue no infallible rule of faith, because wee make the Scripture to bee the rule of faith, and how (say they) can they which vnderstand not the originall, know whether they haue the Scripture yea or no? To help you therefore, this I say in a word: The maine assurance that that which is translated is Gods Word, is the witness of Gods Spirit. This is that anointing which the children of God receiue^l, which enableth to discern all things^m, and

^l 1. Ioh. 2. 27.

^m 1. Cor. 2. 15.

and to know the voyce of Christⁿ. This first perswadeth the heart, of the generall truth contained in the translation, & then continueth to be a director in the triall of particulars. There is a certaine patterne of wholesome words^o called by Diuines the *Analogy of Faith*, which is the maine substance and pith of the whole Scripture. This comming to vs by the Ministry of the Church (the meanes consecrated of God to that end) discovereth it selfe to the soules and consciences of Gods people, to bee the Truth of God: Beeing thus prooued to the soule of a Christian to be pure, this remaineth as a rule to iudge all other parts of the translation by, nothing being to be accounted sound, which is not manifest by due triall to be agreeing hereunto. This is the security of a Christian touching the Translation, that it is the Scripture: It is the very same, which the most learned haue, though they vnderstand the Originall tongues neuer so exactly. For when a man hath read the Scriptures in the native language thereof, and findes the translation of it in the mother tongue to be agreeing to it, yet that thing which after all, must assure his soule, that this is the word of God, is the secret reaching of Gods Spirit, which openeth the heart, that the light of the Truth may shine into it. I hope this shall satisfie you for this. The Ministry of man by which the Scripture is translated for vs and preached to vs, is but as a lanterne, and the word through it will shew it selfe by it owne light. *I haue knowne* (saith David) *by thy Testimonies that thou hast established them*⁹. Euen out of the Word will arise a sufficient witnesse for it selfe. And although it be possible for men ignorant in the Originall tongues in some particulars, (as in matters of story or circumstance) finally to be mistaken, (which may also befall the most skilfull) yet that they should vterly and generally erre (submitting themselves in meekenesse^r to the Ministry of the Church) it is vnpossible.

ⁿ Ioh. 10. 4.

^o 2. Tim. 1. 13.

^p Psa. 119. 140

⁹ Psa. 119. 152

^r Psa. 25. 9.

Nymph. I am glad I moued you in this: The truth is I haue beene vrged with it, by Popish canilliers: but (I thanke God) the power which I feele the Scripture to haue in commanding my inward parts, and in making my soule sometimes to tremble, and againe, sometimes to reioyce together with the sweete Harmonie which I finde in the seuerall parts thereof each with other, hath much strengthened me against all gain-sayers: and herein your speech now hath much confirmed me: But let vs returne to our maine purpose; for I am almost ashamed that I haue held you too long in this matter, and that so much the rather, because there are many other things yet behind wherein I am as desirous of your helpe as in these already handled: yet because I haue this good opportunitie, and doe finde you also so willing to instruct me, I will yet further acquaint you with one other allegation, which beeing answered, I shall (I thinke) be well provided, both to satisfie those of my acquaintance which shall perhaps seeke helpe from mee, and also to say something to those who with their quirkes and shewes of reasons, thinke to put downe such plaine men as I am, when we come into their company. I named it to you before (though happily by length of communication it is slipped from you) and it is this, That euen reading it selfe is preaching: and that they seeke to prooue by these reasons: first, they say, to preach is nothing but to publish the Gospell, and that is done by reading: secondly, in bearing the Scriptures read, we heare the sermons of the Prophets, of Christ, and of his Apostles, which passe all other sermons which any man now can make. Thirdly, there is (they say) euen in reading that which we so much commend preaching for, namely, expounding and applying; for the new Testament is the expounder of the old, and the Epistles of Paul and Peter and the rest, doe apply both vnto mens consciences. Fourthly, certaine Scriptures are produced not only to prooue reading to be preaching: but to prooue it also to be more effectuell then preaching. Thus, though in our common speech we account reading to be one thing, and preaching to be another, yet by these deuises wee are many times shrewdly puzzled, and know not sodainly what to answer.

Epaph. These reasons, what shew soeuer they may make at the first view, yet are they neuer able to prooue that for which they are alleadged, as shall (God willing) appeare in the seueral examination of them. First, for that which

is said, that preaching is nothing but a publishing of the Gospel, I yeeld vnto it, if it be well and rightly vnderstood: and when it is so vnderstood as it ought to bee, then it will appeare that the reading of the bare context, cannot properly be tearmed preaching. I finde in the new Testament soure words especially to bee vsed, when preaching (so farre forth as it is incident to the office of an ordinarie Pastour in Gods Church) is mentioned. The first signifieth, *to deliuer good tydings*^f, because the Gospel is, as it was said by the Angels to the shepherds, *tydings of great ioy to all Gods people*^g. The second and third words^h, signify, *to make manifest*, *to discover*, *to make knowne*, *to set forth to open view*, and so *to handle a matter*, as the Prophet was commaunded to deale with a vision which God had shewed him, namely, *to make it plaine vpon Tables, that he which runneth*

may reade it^x. This shall appeare to bee true to any man that shall take the paines to examine and duly to ponder those places of the new Testament, in which these words are vsed in the Greeke, which beeing applyed to the Minister his office, are translated by the word *Preach*^y. And these kindes of words, dee fitly set forth the duty of a Preacher, which is especially that, which Paul exhorteth the Ephesians to begge of God on his behalfe, to wit, *To make knowne the secret of the Gospell*^z, which seeing it must be sought for as *siluer*, and *searched for as for treasure*^a, is not ordinarily to be looked for in the vpper face as it were, but to be with paines and industrie digged out of the very bowels and heart of the Scripture. The fourth word signifieth *to publish*^b, and as an herald or a cryer, *to deliuer a matter in open place, in the hearing of a multitude, that many may take notice of it*. For this cause the Prophet *Isaiah* was willed to *Crie alonde*^c, and to *Lift vp his voice like a trumpet*, and *Jeremiah* was commaunded to *stand in the gate of the Lords house, and to crie the word there*^d. And hence also it is, that the *wisdom* of God, is said to *stand in the top of the high places*^e, and to make as it were a publike proclamation: *O men lo ye foolish! who so is simple let him come hither. Ho, euery one that thirsteth: come vnto me all ye that are weary &c.* By this it may appeare what it is to Preach, and in what sense Preaching may bee tolerably defined to be a publishing of the Gospell: namely, it is an open and comfortable *disconcrie by word of mouth, making plaine vnto the people of God, the mystrie of godlinesse, euen the secret of the Gospell*. Now, as no man duly considering the nature and vse of the forenamed words, can deny Preaching (by a Minister lawfully called) to be euen such a kinde of publishing the Gospell, as is now set downe: so neither can he with any face or colour affirme, the action of reading the Scripture to be answerable to this description. So that though it bee graunted, that the text of Scripture is the Gospell, and the very word of God; and withall, that reading is after a sort a publishing thereof, because thereby the letter of the Text is recited with a lowde voyce, from an eminent and conspicuous place, in the audience of a multitude: yet when we shall enter into a more exact examination of things, it will then appeare, that Reading simply cannot be called a publishing of the Gospell, in that sense, as it is required of Ministres and Teachers to be spreaders abroad and proclaimers of Gods truth. Adde hereto, that that which is the principall thing looked for of a Preacher in the publishing of the word, the bare Reader in the act of Reading, neither can nor doth performe: and that is, the *deniding the word of truth aright*^h: and (to apply Christs words in a case not much vnlike) *a giuing to them of the household (which is the Church, 1. Tim. 3. 15.) their portion of meate in season*. A Minister, is one to whom the *dispensation (or stewardship) is committed*^k in the family of God: and his office is out of the store-house of the Scripture, to share out to euery one, that which he shall finde by his *caring to know the state of his flocke*^l, to bee best fitting and agreeing to him. As for example: *Milke*^m (that is, the first principles of the word of God) to those which are *inexpert in the word of righteousness*: *Strong meate*ⁿ (that is, doctrine of greater depth) for them, who are able to *bear it*^o: *Meekenesse of instructing*

^f 1. Cor. 9. 16.

καὶ μοι δοκεῖ ἰσχυρῶς

ὑποχρεῖσθαι.

^g Luk. 2. 18.

Luk. 9. 60.

διὰ τὴν ἰσχυρίαν.

^h Act. 4. 2.

καταγγεῖλαι ἐν τῷ

ἰσχυρῶς.

^x Hab. 2. 2.

^y Rom. 9. 17.

διαγγεῖλαι, Act. 17.

23. καταγγεῖλαι.

Act. 26. 23.

καταγγεῖλαι.

1. Cor. 11. 26.

καταγγεῖλετε ὅτι

δοξαζομεν τὸ κυριον.

^z Ephes. 6. 19.

ὑμῶν τὸ μυστήριον

τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.

^a Prou. 2. 4.

^b 2. Tim. 4. 2.

κήρυξον τὸ λόγον.

^c Isa. 58. 2.

^d Ier. 7. 2.

^e Prou. 8. 2, 4.

3, 9. 4.

^f Isa. 55. 1.

^g Math. 11. 28.

What preaching is.

^h 2. Tim. 3. 15.

ⁱ Luke 12. 42.

οἰκονομία.

^k 1. Cor. 9. 17.

^l Prou. 27. 23.

^m Heb. 5. 12. 13

ⁿ Verse 14.

^o 1. Cor. 3. 2.

fructifying for those which are contrarie minded: a rod and sharpe rebuke of slow hel-
 lios, that they may be sound in the faith: Improving (or convincing) of gainsayers,
 that their mouths may be stopped: admonition for them that are unruly: comfort for
 the feeble minded: a decreet and respectiue framing of exhortation to severall
 ages and degrees, to the Elders, as to fathers, to the younger men as to brethren, to the
 elder women as to mothers, to the younger as to sisters. After this sort, euery mans
 portion must bee allotted out vnto him: and this ordering of that prouision,
 which the Lord (as a carefull householder) hath left for his spirituall family, is
 committed vnto the Minister. This is that action which Paul calleth a dea-
 ling vnto the people the Gospell of God: our Sauiour teacheth it sowing, which eu-
 ry country-man knoweth to be more then to bring the seed into the place and
 to set it at the furrowes end, (which is in effect as much as the Reader doth,)
 there must be a disposing and a dispersing of the seed with the hand, that euery
 part of the land which is eared vp. may haue some, which is the liuely repre-
 sentation of the very act of Preaching, by which the word of God, (that seed of
 immortality,) is cast by the labourers in Gods husbandry into euery heart. The
 Scripture I confesse is profitable for these purposes, and able to make the man of
 God absolute and perfect vnto all the good workes of his calling, and it is no whole-
 some foode nor no cleane seede, vnlesse it be deliuered out of that Garner: but
 yet, vnlesse there be more performed, then is done by naked reading, (to wit, a
 propounding to the household, the whole store, as it were in grolle,) it cannot be,
 but whilst euery one is left to be his owne caruer, the young ones will be star-
 ued, and the riotous and misgouerned will surfet themselues, with greedie and
 vnbecoming taking that vnto them, which they are neither fit nor able to re-
 ceiue. And this, I thinke may serue to shew how little reason there is in this first
 Reason, why reading of the Scripture should deserue the honourable name of
 Preaching: when as both our common speech, and (which is more) the lan-
 guage of the holy Ghost, hath put an apparant difference betwixt them.

Nymph. Indeede I acknowledge that to be true out of my owne experience: for
 though by private reading the Scripture as also by hearing it read, I haue receiued
 much comfort: (the memorie of things taught thereby beeing renewed, and the truth of
 them confirmed) yet I haue often bene quite set, often bene altogether mistaken and still
 affraid of my owne iudgement euen in plainer places, untill I haue found the publike ex-
 position giuen by the Minister iuxta and accord with my opinion. But what say you to the
 second reason: namely, that in the Scriptures read, wee heare the worthy Sermons of
 Christ, of the Prophets, and of his Apostles: and therefore reading is Preaching?

Epaph. I say it is a very weake argument. That the Sermons of Christ, the
 Prophets and Apostles were excellent Sermons, and that the summe and a-
 bridgement of them is to be found in Scripture, no man goeth about to deny:
 yet this being granted, will neuer prooue a Reader to be a Preacher. For he is
 not a Preacher, who reciteth publike things of another mans inditing, (for
 then how easie a thing were it to be a Preacher! but hee which deliuereth mat-
 ters (though not inuented) yet in respect of art and industry compiled and fra-
 med by himselfe. If it be said, that the Sermons of Christ, &c. though they bee
 not of his framing that readeth them, yet beeing read may turne to the profite
 of the people; I answer, that the questiō is not, whether they may be profitable,
 but whether the reading of them may be called preaching. God forbid any man
 should denie the publike reading of them to be for the behoofe of Gods people,
 (I hope you haue not forgotten what I told you as my iudgement in this case)
 but how it may be said, that he which hath read them to the people, hath per-
 formed that office of a Minister which wee call preaching, neither can I con-
 ceiue, neither (as I thinke) is any man able to set downe. Besides, if the word
 Sermon, shall be precisely vrged, that which was the sermon of Christ, or Iere-
 miah, or Paul, when they liued, and the same vttered by them, cannot be now
 being

p 2. Tim. 2. 25.
 q 1. Cor. 4. 11.
 r Tit. 1. 12. 13.
 s Verse 9. 11.
 t 1. Thes. 5. 14

u 1. Tim 5. 1. 2

x 1. Thess. 2. 8.
 y Math. 13. 3.

z 1. Pet. 1. 23.
 a 1. Cor. 3. 9.
 b 2. Tim. 3. 16
 17.

c Act. 15. 21.
 ἀναγιγνωσκόντες &c
 ἀντιλαμβάνοντες

being recorded in the Bible, and read out by another, so properly called a Sermon: because in our common speech, a Sermon requireth the tongue & voice of him that framed it. And therefore to say (as some doe) that Christ or some one of the ancient Prophets or Apostles preacheth to vs, when we heare the summe of their Sermons read vnto vs, is but a borrowed kinde of speech, vsuall amongst schollers. Such as that is, that *the blond of Abel speaketh*^d; and that *he being dead yet speaketh*^e; or which is said of the *beaues and firmament*, that there is no speech nor language, where there voice is not heard^f, and the like, common in the Scripture: which may also (by the way) be noted to answer those who in this matter to prooue the Scriptures read to be preaching, doe auouch the Scriptures to haue not only a liuely voice, as birds and beatts, but also a speaking voyce too, as men & Angels haue, whereby they both teach vs, and preach vnto vs. To which end they alleadge those places, in which, *saying & speaking*^h is ascribed to the Scripture. May not a man as well prooue that the earth can speake, and that stones and beames haue a voyce, because *Iob* saith that his *land did not cry against him, nor the furrowes complaine*ⁱ? and because the Prophet affirmes, touching oppression, that *the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beame shall answer*^k? Besides, is there any sense in it to say, the Scripture hath a voice as a man (for of the other, that they haue a voyce as Angels, I will not dispute, for what voyce Angels haue, as Angels, I cannot determine:) The Scripture speaketh mediately by man: Man speaketh of himselfe without another frō himself, to cause him to be heard: And if this were true that the Scripture hath such a speaking voyce as man hath, I see not for my part what neede of a Ministry at all: For what should need more then to set vp a Bible in the Church: It hath an articulate speaking voyce, it can preach. Againe, not to dwell vpon the answering of such enforced collections, let the nature and estate of those which are called the Sermons of the Prophets, of Christ, and his Apostles be a little considered. First in generall this is to be knowne, that we haue but the brieft and summe, and as it were the heads of their Sermons related in the Scripture: for if all that every one of these spake publikely by way of teaching had bene written, we might well say as Saint *Iohn* said, touching the Acts and sayings of our Saviour Christ, *The world could not containe the bookes*^l: and therefore (if profit be desired) there must necessarily be some course taken, by which the things abridged, by the pen-men of the holy Ghost in their writings, may be enlarged. Secondly, the Sermons of Moses, are so interlaced with iudiciall ordinances and ceremoniall rites, appertaining onely to the policy of those times, that for the peoples behoofe, it is more then conuenient, that they should enioy the benefite of an able Minister, who may informe them herein, what things be morall, and what be temporary, what is the substance of euery ceremoniall shadow, and what the perpetuall and vchangeable equity of euery iudiciall constitution. Thirdly, touching the preachings of the Prophets; though they be full of comfort and abounding with sweet consolation, because the maine scope and drift of them all, is to foreshew the renewing and restoring of the Church by Christ, and though they do also notable make knowne the iust iudgement of God against sinne; yet they are so intermixed with mysticall prophecies, with hidden parables, with historicall narrations, and descriptions of Countries, with borrowed speeches, and proprieties of that holy language in which they were deliuered, that, how soeuer sometimes a lambe (as the prouerbe is) may finde a foord easily to be waded through, yet vnlesse there be added the helpe & guidance of some learned *Ezra*^m, some *Messenger*, or *Interpreter*, as *Elisha* fitly calleth himⁿ, and the same no ordinarie man, but (as the text speaketh) *one of a thousand*, the people cannot possibly reape that good which God intendeth in the reuealing of those things. Fourthly, for the Sermons of our Saviour, as we haue but the very short summe of many of them^o, (according

^d Heb. 12. 24.^e Chap. 11. 4.^f Psal. 19. 1. 3.^g Rom. 3. 19.^h Heb. 12. 5.ⁱ Iob 31. 38.^k Hab. 2. 11.^l Ioh. 21. 25.

Gregor. epist.

ad Leand.

^m Nehem. 8.ⁿ Iob 33. 23.^o Math. 4. 27.

Luk. 4. 21.

as I said before) so for those which are reported more largely by the Euangelists, I perswade my selfe there is no man, but (if he will speake the truth, out of his owne conscience) he will confesse, that he learneth more by them when by preaching they are explained, then when they are onely read vnto him. Fifthly, we haue in the Bible very few copies of the Apostles sermons: those that be, are in the booke of the Acts, and yet many times, this is all which is said of them: *they preached in Iesus there surrection from the dead*^p, *they went too and fro preaching the Word, preached Christ, preached the things that concerne the kingdome of God*^q, and many the like speeches: all which are like vnto the little cloude, which the seruant of *Elias* saw^r, which though at the first it was but like a mans hand, yet at last it covered the face of heauen: so these, being clauses of very few words, yet minister iust matter of many large discourses, and the same also very needfull for the well vnderstanding of them. If it shall be said that the Apostles writings were sermons, I answer, they cannot properly be called their sermons: *Paul* writing to the *Romanes*, saith, that besides this labour of writing, he was ready also to preach the Gospel vnto them^s: so that he did not account his writing to bee preaching. The Epistles of the Apostles were the summes of that doctrine which they had taught by word of mouth, and according to the tenour whereof, their desire was, that the Ministers of the places to whom they wrote should proceede. I know they were read in the Churches^t, according as it was meete, that a matter written to a whole congregation should bee communicated to all in publike: but what then? I doubt not, but the pastors in the severall assemblies, did (as we now doe) preach vpon those Epistles, and open and apply them to their auditories: and so much may easily appeare, as by other places, so especially by that speech to the *Hebrewes*, by the author of the Epistle written to them: *I beseech you also brethren, suffer the words of exhortation: for I haue written vnto you in few words*^u: which speech (as it is well obserued by two learned interpreters of our later times) the Apostle purposely vsed, least his writing should bee an occasion to any, of lessening that due estimation which the ordinary course of preaching did deserue. It is all one as if the Apostle had said: *Brethren, notwithstanding all this which I haue written vnto you: yet I pray you continue your accustomed reuerence to the labours of your owne Ministers: 1, as the nature of an Epistle requireth, haue written briefly, therefore you shall still neede the assistance of your watchfull and learned Ouerseers, who shall enlarge these points, which I haue drawne as it were into a narrow roome, and by powerfull exhortations apply them either to your comfort or reproofe, as their knowledge in your estate from time to time shall direct them.* This is the meaning of that place, plainly prouing the necessitie of ioyning the paines of a preaching Minister, with the writings and Epistles of the Apostles of Christ Iesus: Obserue this also further with me touching that place, that that phrase (*word of exhortation*) there vsed, as it is but once more in the new Testament (as far as I can call to minde) so there where it is, it is put directly for that preaching, or (as I may tearme it) sermoning, which was wont in publike assemblies to follow the reading of the Scripture^x. And thus haue you my answer to this second stout reason, why reading should bee preaching, because forsooth, thereby is communicated to vs the summe and substance of the worthie sermons which Christ and the Prophets and Apostles haue formerly deliuered. The weaknesse of which reason, I hope this short discourse, hath made you to perceiue.

Nymph. For these two alleadged reasons, you haue indifferently satisfied mee. I doe now expectt, what you will say, touching the last reason why reading should bee preaching.

Epaph. The third reason (as I remember) was, that reading may therefore truly be called preaching, because in our Church the reading of the Scripture is so ordered, that first, there is a portion of the old Testament read, next of the new,

^p A&.4.2.
^q A&.8.4,5,12

^r 1.Kin.18.44.

^s Rom.1.15.

^t Col.4.16.

^u Heb.13.22.
Caluin & Iu-
nius vpon the
place.

^x A&.13.15.

new, and thirdly some parcell of the Epistles: which they will haue to be called preaching, because as the new Testament is an exposition of the old, so the Epistles are the applying of both vnto Gods people. And Scripture also generally doth expound Scripture, and what is preaching but an expounding of the Scripture? This I thinke, is the third reason that you told me of.

Nymph. *You haue hit it right, if you can answer it as fully, as you haue rehearsed it truly, then it shall neuer be any occasion of scruple to me hereafter.*

* 2. Cor. 1. 20.
 y Heb. 13. 8.
 Vetus testam-
 entum in
 nouo reuela-
 tum, nouum
 in veteri re-
 latum. Aug in
 Psal. 105.

Epaph. To make a short answer to a slight reason, this is that I say: It is true, if we compare the whole new Testament, with the whole old Testament, that the latter is an exposition of the former, because it maketh knowne vnto vs, that all the ancient promises, touching the Messias, are yea and amen in Christ Iesus*: so that the substance both of old and new is this, *Iesus Christ yesterday, and to day, the same also is for euer y.* And hereupon is that saying of Augustine: The old Testament (saith he) is revealed in the new, and the new was as it were lapped and folded vp in the old: the same may also be acknowledged touching the Epistles, that in them the doctrine both of the old and new Testament is applied and pressed vpon mens consciences by wholesome exhortations. But what then? though this hold in generall that the new Testament is the Commentary to the old, and the Epistles, the applyers of both, yet it will scarcely be found to hold in particulars: namely, that such a parcell of the new Testament which commeth in order to be read, is an exposition of the speciall doctrine and matter of that portion of the old Testament, which was read before it, or that that part of the Epistles, which followeth both, is a direct and expresse vnger of both. So that howsoeuer when we diuide the Scriptures into these three parts, the old Testament, the historie of the Gospell, and the Epistles, it bee true, that this is the common nature and state of them, that the second part giueth light vnto the first, and the latter raiseth exhortations out of both, yet when we come to single out these parts into seuerall portions, we shall not finde that precise & exact correspondence, as that the exposition of the same points, shall be said to follow one the other. As for that which is said, that Scripture expoundeth Scripture, it is but a deceitfull kinde of speaking, to entrap the simple: as will strait appeare when the true meaning of it, is deliuered in another forme, which is this, *That one place of Scripture, affordeth helpe, for the cleering of another:* which albeit it be a certaine truth and necessary to bee maintained, yet it doth not imply that any actuall or vocall expounding, can bee attributed to the Scripture. This hath as little weight in it, as that before touching the speaking of the Scripture. The Scripture speaketh by the voyce of man, and so it is fitted and applied to be the expositer of it selfe by the industry of man. And this is all which I will oppose to this third reason: which though perhaps it may make a shew among those that are of lesse iudgement, yet it can deceiue no man, that hath any ordinarie skill in the state of an argument.

Nymph. *I must not forget to minde you of those places of Scriptures which are produced, for the weakening of your maine assertion: which places are partly to proue reading to be as operative of all Christian vertues, as the most adorned sermons; and partly to make it good, that reading is not only a powerfull kinde of preaching simply, but (which is more) of greater power to moue then any preachers Sermons.*

Epaph. Forbeare not I pray you to propound them, I will vse the best of my poore skill to answer them.

2 Chap. 31. 11.
 12.
 3 Chap. 8. 9.

Nymph. *The places of the first sort are such in which the same effects seeme to haue followed, or to bee promised to follow reading, which can bee wrought by preaching: as in Deuteronomy 2, it is said, that the Law beeing read before all Israel, the knowledge of God, the feare of God and the keeping and obseruing of the commandments of God shall follow thereupon: Againe, in Nehemiah 8, it is reported that whē Ezra had but only read the Law vnto your people, it was of that powerful operation, that*

that it cast them all into mourning and weeping. Thirdly, of Iosias it is recorded, ^b that the bare reading of the law caused him to rend his clothes, and made his hart to melt away within him. Fourthly, even Faith it selfe is ascribed unto the action of reading, as, These things are written, that ye should beleue ^c. Now (say some) that which is written cannot make us beleue but only by reading. Lastly, our Sanior bidding us to search the Scripture (and that is, say they which urge these places, to reade it) addeth, that so we shall finde eternall life ^d. Here in these places, you see the knowledge of God, the faith of God, the feare of God, the obedience of God, and eternall life with God, are expressly ascribed unto the bare reading of the word, who therefore can deny Reading to be an effectuall kind of preaching? After this manner I haue heard these places urged, I pray you direct me how to answer them.

^b 2 King 22.
11. 19.

^c Iohn 20. 31.

^d Iohn 5. 39.

Epaph. I will say something to each place in order, hoping to make it to appear vnto you, that none of them maketh ought for the iustification of that for which they are alledged. And first to that of *Deuteronomy* I answer two things. First, that the sequels of the argument (which is this, By reading, the feare of God, and the obedience of God may be gotten, and therefore Reading is an effectuall kind of preaching) is very weak: For by the same reason, the publike execution of an offender among the Iewes, might be said to be an effectuall preaching, inasmuch as this fruit was said should come even by it, that all Israel should heare and feare, and do no more any such wickednesse ^e. Here is Feare and Reformation intended to follow, and yet here is no preaching: vpon the sight of the mighty power which the Lord shewed vpon the Egyptians, it is said, that the people feared the Lord, and beleued the Lord ^f. Here was both Feare of God, and Faith too; was therefore the drowning of the Egyptians in the sight of the Israelites, a preaching (properly?) Every occasion or furtherance of grace or Christian vertue is not preaching: secondly, I answer, that it shall neuer be prooued that this reading prescribed in this place, was a bare reading, a reading not accompanied with that which else-where is termed, a causing the people to vnderstand the reading ^g. It is out of all question, that those to whom this charge of reading was giuen, and who were personally to performe it, were the Priests the sons of Levi ^h; and was it their function to be onely readers? Was it not their duty to teach Iacob Gods iudgements, and Israel his law ⁱ? & is not to teach in every mans vnderstanding a further matter then to reade, that is, to deliuer the words as they lie in the volume of the book, and no more? so that the charge to reade, had a further reference, even to that labour and businesse of expounding, which the Priests were bound to ioyne with their publike readings. This for the first place. Now for the second, touching the working of the word read vpon Iosias, this I say. First, that Iosias was a believer before: for this was in the eighteenth yeare ^k of his raigne, but he did uprightly in the sight of the Lord ^l, even in the very first entry into his kingdom ^m: so that this example touching the power of the word read, vpon a man already conuerted, is not proper to our maine question, which is concerning the meanes of the first begetting of faith in mens harts: secondly, that the times then were something extraordinary. For by means of Manasses & Ammon, the grandfather and father of Iosias, the course of teaching was out of vse. The Priestes were gone from their charges ⁿ. Now when the vsuall meanes is wanting, God worketh otherwise, and blesteth reading only, to many, who for the present cannot otherwise be supplied. Thirdly, I may safely affirme, that in the story there is nothing to the contrary, but that, together with Shaphans reading there wēt either then, or not long after, the preaching of Hilkiah the Priest, of whose presence at the time of that reading, the text maketh mention ^o. Take which of these answers you will, it may serue for the weakening of the argument from that place. As for that in *Nehemiah*, (which you named as second, but came not to my mind til now) I meruaile at the vrging it: sith there it is plaine, that there was a course taken by Ezra to make the people vnderstand ^p. If it be said that that mourning there reported, is ascribed to the

^e Deut. 13. 9.
10. 11. Cap.
17. 13.
^f Exod. 14. 31

^g Nehe. 8. 8.

^h Deut. 31 9.
ⁱ Deut. 33. 20.

^k 2 Kin. 22. 3.
^l Verse 2.
^m 2 Chro 34. 3

ⁿ 2 Chro. 35. 2

^o 2 Kin. 22. 12

^p Cap. 8. 8.

1 Verse 9.

2 Verse 7.

Aug. in Ioan.
tract. 121. Ly-
ranus. Hugo
Card. Ianle-
nius.

[A& 8. 31.

Whitak. cap. 1.
Con. 1. q. 1.
hortatur vt nō
legant modo,
&c.

* John 5. 47.

* Prou. 30. 33.
* 1 Pct. 3. 16.

words of the Law, and therefore not to any glosse vpon them; I answer, that in euery mans conceining it was not the sound of the words which made the weep, but the vnderstanding of the words, and the apprehension of the sense and meaning, and intent of the words; Now they were the *Lenites* which caused the people to vnderstand the Law: so that, sith the vnderstanding the law made them weep, (as common sense must needes cūct) it must necessarily follow that it was the *Lenites* their expounding, and not their onely reading which so affected their hearts, & dissolued them into teares. Could the words of the Law haue effected this, had they not bin vnderstood, and not their giuing the sense, that made the people vnderstand? You named also two places out of S. Iohn: *These things are written, that you should (or might) beleene*; and how can things written make vs to beleue, but only by reading? This is a very strange argument. The purpose of that place (in the iudgement of the learned) is to acquaint vs both particularly with the scope of that story, and generally with the common drift of the whole scripture, which is, to bring vs to beleue, and by beleueing vnto life eternall. The place is ordinarily vrged by our best Diuines, to iustify the sufficiency of the Scriptures without Traditions. Now what is this to proue reading to be preaching? yes (say you) for how can that which is written make vs to beleue but only by reading? Indeed it is true, to the end the matter of the Scripture may bring vs to beleue it must be knowne, and to the end it may be known, it must be read: Is therefore the act of reading the begetter of faith? surely no. I aske this question, *How can that which is read make vs to beleue, vnlesse it be vnderstood?* I hope we wil not make the words of Scripture like words of coniuration, the very noyse whereof shal effect that which is intended. If then the vnderstanding of that which is read bee necessary vnto faith, why may I not say with the Eunuch, *How can we vnderstand without a guide?* Though then it be true that things written cannot make vs to beleue except they be read, yet it doth not follow that therefore only reading is sufficient vnto faith. The Scriptures must be vnderstood as well as read, they must be beleued to be true as well as vnderstood, they must be applied in particular, as well as assented vnto in generall; to these the reading of the scriptures is the next step after writing them, but yet not the thing which is onely necessary. As much may be said of that other place, where eternal life is promised to *searching the Scriptures*, and to *search* (you say) is, to *read*: to *read*, is but a degree to *searching*. I remember the words of a reuerend Diuine vpon that place; Christ (saith he) doth not only exhort to read the Scriptures, but to inquire into them, and to sift them thoroughly; hee requireth such laborious diligence as they vse which seeke into the earth for treasure that is hidden. The Scriptures must bee read that they may be searched, but the naked act of reading or of hearing read is no searching: But of these places enough, vnlesse you be not satisfied. The other now if you please.

Nymph. *I will not undertake to reply vpon you: if hereafter making use of these resolutions which I receiue from you, I shall meet with further opposition, I will not spare to acquaint you therewith. In the meantime, I will tell you what I haue heard alledged to prone the word read to be (as I said) of more power to moue then any Preachers Sermons. Two places I remember aboue others; The one, the speech of Christ to the Iewes, If yee beleue not Moses writings, how shall ye beleue my words?*

Epaph. Why? what of that? wherein doth that place make for this purpose?

Nymp. *Here they say, our Sauior himselfe ascribeth greater power of working faith vnto the written scriptures, then vnto his owne most liuely and excellent Sermons.*

Epaph. This putteth me in mind of the saying of Salomon, *He that wringeth his nose causeth blood to come out*. Here is a manifest peruertering^x of the Scripture, & a forcing that from it, which was neuer intended in it. To beleue *Moses writings*, is, to beleue the matter which *Moses* wrote: and to beleue *Christs words*, is, to beleue the matter which *Christ* spake: so that our Sauours speech is this in other words;

words; If you beleue not the matter that Moses wrote, how shall you beleue the matter that I speake? No man can deny this to be the true sense. Here is now no comparison betwixt writing & speaking, or betwixt reading and preaching, but only a simple avouchment of this truth, That a man not beleeuing Moses doctrine, cannot beleue Christs doctrine: which doth not proceede hence, because a matter written and read is more effectually then a matter preached & heard, but because of the concurrence and agreement of the doctrine of Moses and the doctrine of Christ: Moses wrote of Christ¹, and Christ did interpret Moses². There being then no difference betwixt their doctrines, he that beleued not the one, could not give any credit to the other. Put this case, that Christ had also written, as Moses did: It might then have bene truly said, that he which would not beleue Moses writings, would not beleue Christs writings, and yet it could not follow thence, that there is more power of working faith in Moses writings then in Christs: & yet this is the state of their argument that thus reason: Againe, it is a true proposition, That they which would not beleue Iohn Baptists preaching, would not beleue Christs; yet it cannot bee thereupon inferred, that Iohns Sermons were more auailable to beget faith then Christs. So it is true, that they which will not beleue the preaching now, would not have beleued Christ himselfe if they had heard him, are therefore our preachings of more force to worke vpon the hearts of the hearers then were Christs? The truth of all these speeches depends wholly vpon the samenes of the doctrine, in the one and in the other. I may adde further, that by Moses writings may well be vnderstood the doctrine that was preached out of Moses writings; Moses was preached in the Synagogues euery Sabbath³, and as well may we say, that Christ preferreth the sermons of the Priests and Scribes before his owne, as that hee ascribeth more power of working faith to Moses writings, then to his owne preachings. But what is your other place?

¹ Iohn 5. 46.

² Luke 24. 27.

³ Acts 15. 21.

Nymph. The other is out of Pauls Epistles: where (as some say) an aduersary of Pauls found his affection a great deale more touched by the bare reading of his letters (which he plainly confessed to be strong and mighty) then euer it had bin by the hearing of his sermons, which he despised as light and things of no value. His letters (saith he) are sore and strong, but his bodily presence is weake, and his speech of no value^b. This is the second place, and this is the manner of disputing from it.

^b 2 Cor. 10. 10

Epaph. To this place, if I shall answer in one word, that here is no comparison made betwixt Pauls writings and his sermons, but only betwixt the phraze of his Epistles, and his ordinary speech, and other deportment when he was personally at Corinthus, I am sure it is more then any man out of the Text is able to disprove. Some wretched ones, hearing how roundly and how powerfully Paul wrote against the corruptions crept in amongst them, began to thinke with themselves, What? This man now taketh vpon him being a far off, and thundreth against vs with high and peremptory words; but (alas) when we saw him here, we beheld in him nothing more then ordinary, nay he seemed then euen basely fearfull, and all his speeches savored of a desire to get our fauours. Whence then is this new courage that hee hath taken to him being absent? Thus they measured Pauls ministeriall & apostolicall threatenings in his Epistles, by his outward semblance, when hee was amongst them. The truth is, they were no more touched by his menaces when hee was absent, then they were by his behavior when he was present, but did equally contemne both. That sorenesse and strength which they attributed to his letters, was not out of any apprehension of the power of them in themselves. It was altogether spoken in scorne, Thinkes he now to affright vs by letters, who being heere caried himselfe amongst vs so demissely? The place thus opened, I suppose, maketh little to the prouing of the power of reading aboue preaching. For what though some wondered to heare Paul in absence to reprove so sharply, who in presence both spake and behaued himselfe so gently? Is therefore reading able to worke more powerfully vpon mens affections then preaching can? The true drift of Paul was,

Si corā adef-
set vix hiscere
auderet. Calu.
in locum. Tu-
milis propter
timorem, vel
propter fauo-
rem captan-
dum. Tho.
Aq. in locum.

Ostendit fal-
sum esse quod
sibi imponitur
Tho. Aqu. in
locum.

^c 1 Cor. 2. 3.

Si necesse fue-
rit. Tho. Aqu.

^d 2 Cor. 10. 11

to put off the imputatiō which was cast vpon him, that when he was many miles from Corinth, he durst reprove and speake vehemently, but when he was there he was no body, but liued among them in *weaknesse, and in feare and much trem- bling*^c: And therefore he maketh it knowne vnto them, that (if need so require) they should finde him to equall his fashion & cariage when he commeth, to the quality and stile of his Epistles when he is wanting^d: so then this beeing further noted, that *Pauls* intent was to disproue those, who challenged him for a kind of peremptorines in his absence, & for a cowardly disposition, being present, there will neuer be any such thing iustly collected hence, as, that to heare a mans writings read, is more powerful then to heare him preach. Thus for this place. Pro- ceede now to what you haue further to enquire.

Nymph. This point hath held vs longer then I either wished or imagined: but I was willing, seeing God had given this opportunity, to mention as much as I could remember, of things which I haue heard spoken touching these points: neither is there now anything be- hind, (that I can call to minde) which I may further propound vnto you, concerning this matter.

Athenzus.

Epaph. It is no maruell though the examination of this one point, hath spent vs so much time: for this is certaine, that euery short obiection will require a large confutation. Now for the matter it selfe, there may perhaps be some other obiections, differing from these in shew, but yet they will all in the end be found to be the same. I remember I haue read of a vaine-glorious boaster, who hauing but one only seruant, yet because he would be thought to keepe a great retinue, would call that one seruant by many seuerall names, that men might imagine he had sundry seruants: so, men may set new names, and new formes vpon these al- legations which we haue examined, that so they might affright vs with the name of multitude, but when they are looked into, they will proue the same thinges, varying in colour and pretence, but agreeing in substance.

Exceptions
against the
manner of
preaching.

Nymph. That I may then reape benefit by your aduice in respect of that which fol- loweth, I said (if you remember) that the exceptions in which I desired to bee resolved, were some against preaching it selfe, some against the manner of it: the exceptions against preaching it selfe, I haue (as memory would serue) acquainted you with: there are three things in the manner of your preaching that are much disliked and discommended: the first is, Rudenesse: the second, is roughnesse: the third, is ouermuch commonnesse. Tou- ching the first, it is said, that you preach vnlearnedly without eloquence, without allega- tion of Fathers and of other Authors, and therefore you are accounted but as a company of English Doctors, which preach vpon the suddaine what cometh into your heads, with- out study, which causeth your doctrine to be the lesse regarded.

^a Iere. 48. 10.

^b Ecclel. 4. 17.

^c 1 Cor. 5. 30.

^d Psal. 50. 16.

^e 1 Cor. 9. 26.

^f Prou. 26. 18.

Αἰστοὶ λαλοῦν,

ἀδυνατοὶ ταῖς

λέξις.

ἐκείνη διδάχῃ.

^g 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Epaph. Verily for mine owne part I do as much mislike rashnesse in preach- ing, without due preparation, and rudenesse in handling the word of life, as any man, I know hee is cursed that doth the worke of the Lord negligently^c. And as it is meet for euery man when he entreteth into the house of God, to take heed to his foote^f, so it is much more requisite for him that must enter as it were into the seat of the Lord, and speak vnto the people in *Christs* steads, to be very well aduised before he take the *covenant* of God into his mouth^h. And indeede, the bold hardnesse of many now adaies, is greatly to bee pitied, who so ordinarily hand ouer head, (as we say) step vp into the pulpit, and when they are there, doe little better then beat the aireⁱ, and behaue themselues many times like the mad man of whom *Salomon* speaketh, who casteth fire-brands, and arrowes, and mortall thinges^k: and so (as the proverb is) though they speake much, yet say little, by that meanes ex- posing the neuer-enough reuerenced exercise of preaching, vnto the reproches and scoffes of euill speakers. Besides, for learning, I confesse, that it is necessarily required in preaching. *Saint Paul* saith, preaching must be discharged in all lear- ning^l. All liberall arts and sciences are hand-maides to Diuinity, and doe owe a kinde of seruice vnto Gods Church. It is said, a Minister must bee a workman, right-

rightly dividing the word of truth^m: now if he want his knife, that is, his art and cunning, well he may teare and rend it, and violently dismember it, but that he should rightly divide it, that is vnpollible. Yet withall, this I adde, that if to preach after a popular and familiar fashion, with desire to please to the conceit and the capacity of the simplest, and to stand most vpon allegation of the holy text, very seldome and very sparingly mentioning other testimonies, eyther of profane & diuine Writers: if I say to preach on this wise be to be termed rude and vnlearned preaching, truly for mine owne particular, I had rather acknowledge that fault, then seeke to put it from me.

Nymph. What is then your opinion touching humane learning, and the writings of the auncient Fathers of the Church, are they not very keeneusefull for you that are Students and professors of Diuinity?

Epaph. For the study of humane learning, I would not haue you conceiue otherwise of mee, but that I hold it very expedient for him that intendeth the profession of Diuinity: I am of his mind which would haue a scholler like the wittie Bee, which gathereth honny out of euery flower: and I willingly yeelde to S. *Augustines* conceit, who compareth the knowledge of humane sciences and profane Authors, to the spoiling of the Egyptians by the Israelites. Howbeit I would also still giue my allowance to these studies with this caution, namelic, if they be used to prepare the wit and not to detain it and keepe it too long from grauer studies: for seeing as the saying is, Learning is long, & our life but short, it must needs be a preposterous course, to spend the most and best time in those things which are but as it were circumstances to the principall science. Againe, for the Fathers, this I say in few words, I receiue them, and do a kind of homage to their very names, and I am contented to acknowledge that of them al which was said of two of them, to wit, that they are euen the hammers of Heretiks, and the eyes of the world. Our later Heretikes, as the Antitrinitarians, the Anabaptists, the Suensfeldians, the Libertines, the Papists, haue reuiued the auncient heresies of elder times, against which those holy men euen spent themselves: and it is to be reputed as a great blessing of God, and an argument of his especiall care and prouidence for his Church, that their writings are preserved to this day, by which wee are the better fitted to grapple with the enemies of Gods truth. And yet in the study of the Fathers, there is diuers times a double error committed: the one is, that men begin the study of Diuinity with the reading of their works: which course for the most part breedeth both confusion for want of methode, and errour also through the lacke of knowledge in the rule and proportion of faith, by which to trie all things: that so onely that which is good may be kept: the other errour is, that many are ouer-much deuoted to them, being ready almost to swear to any thing which is affirmed by them: whereas indeede they both might and did erre in many things, often altering their iudgements, retracting and repealing many things, seeing more in their grauer yeares, then at the first they did perceiue. *Hierome* confelleth that he was in one minde in some things when he was a youth, and of another when he grew more in yeares. He acknowledged also, that in some things he played the Rhetorician, and did discourse something idly after the manner of declaimers. *Augustine* in many things was led more by affection then by iudgement, speaking sometimes that whereof he was not fully resolved, as touching Purgatorie, and prayer for the dead, out of the abundant loue to his mother *Monica*: sometimes forbearing to vtter that which he thought, through lathnesse to incurre the offence of some, yea, and frankly hee acknowledged, that his ignorance in Scripture was greater then his knowledge. And *Origen* was so ialous of his owne iudgements, that he would neuer aduenture to write any thing till hee was fortie yeares old, neither would he suffer those things which he had taught publikely, to be taken by Notaries, whose intent was to make them common to the world.

^m 2 Tim. 2. 15

Malle agnos-
cere culpam
quam depre-
cari. Pic. Mi-
rand.

Api argumeto
se similit. Hier
De doct. chr.
l. 2. cap. 14.

Si praparent
ingenium nō
detineant.
Senec.
Ars longa,
vita breuis.
Ego illos vene-
ror & tantis
nomib. semp
assurgo, Sen l.
8. ep 65.

August was
called here-
ticorum mal-
leus, and Am-
brose, Orbis
terrarum oculo.

^m 1 Thes 5. 20
Iurare in ver-
ba.

Witness Au-
stins retracta-
tions.

Rhetorici
sumus & in
morem decla-
matorium pau-
lis per lulumus
Contra Hel-
uid.

In Enc. ad
Laur.

Ad Ianuariū.

In ipis sanctis
scrip. multo
nesciam plura
quam sciam.

Epi 119.

Picus Miran.

ex Eulch.

And therefore though it be very profitable and expedient for a Diuine to bee well studied in the Fathers, yet it is good to reade their workes as the workes of men. It was a good aduice which *Augustine* gaue to a friend of his; I would not (saith hee) haue thee follow my authority, as though you should thinke your selfe bound to beleue whatsoeuer I say, because I say it. It is wisdom to hold that rule in the perusing of them all. But I forget my selfe, to enter into this discourse to you, whom it doth not so properly concerne. Howsoever, by this that I haue now said, you may vnderstand my opinion touching both the Fathers and other (as you call it) prophane learning.

Nolo authori-
tat. meam se-
quaris, vt ideo
putes tibi ali-
quid necesse
esse credere,
quoniam a
me dicitur.
Ad Paulinum

Nymph. But I pray sir, why may not the testimonies and writings of men be lawfully used in the action of preaching, as in the private preparation for it?

Epaph. It is no good consequence, to say that they may be alleadged in the pulpit, because they may be perused in the study. When as *Salomon* made preparation for the building of the temple, he had 80000. *Masons in the mountaines*, and among so many, there could not chuse but be much hewing and knocking, and hammering, yet there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tooles of yron heard in

* 1. King. 5. 15.

* 1. Kings 6. 7.

* 1. Cor. 3. 9.

* 1. Cor. 2. 5.

Si quid dica-
tur absque
Scriptura, au-
ditorum cog-
nitio claudi-
cat. In Psal 86.
Non valet,
hæc ego dico,
hæc tu dicis,
hæc ille dicit,
sed hæc dicit
Dominus. Ad
Vincent.

the house while it was in building. After the same manner it is in Gods spiritual building; those things may lawfully bee vsed in the making prouision for it, which are not of the like necessitie or lawfulness in the actuall performance of it. But to speake more directly, (because these similitudes serue more to giue light, then strength to a matter,) if you bee desirous to know a reason why wee ought to bee very sparing in the vse of mens testimonies in our ordinarie Sermons, this is (as I thinke) the principall, namely, that our faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God: that is to say, that our iudgement in matters of religion might be grounded not vpon the opinions and verdicts of men, but vpon the certen and vndoubted truth of God. What is it to the conscience of the hearer, that this is such a mans opinion, or the saying of such a Doctor, it being so well knowne that they might erre? Surely the conscience can neuer finde sure footing vntill it cometh to the Scripture. It is a good speech of *Chrysostome*. If any thing (saith hee) bee spoken without Scripture, the knowledge of the hearers halteth: his meaning is, that the iudgement is neuer firme till Scripture hath resolved it. It is of no force (saith *Augustine*) to tell the people, This I say, and this such an one saith: onely this, Thus saith the Lord, that striketh the stroke, and doth either conuince or confirme the hearers conscience, it maketh him either to agree to it, or not to be able to say against it.

Nymph. Doe you then thinke that it is not at all lawfull for a Preacher in a Sermon to alleadg the Fathers, or to insert the sayings of heathen Poets, Oratours, Philosophers, and such like?

Epaphras. I doe not say that it is absolutely vnlawfull to alleadg a sentence out of an auncient Writer, or out of a Heathen Author: for besides, that many graue, godlie, and well learned men doe sometimes so; there may bee as I thinke some (at least) tollerable causes to alleadg them. As for example: the Papists ordinarily giue out (as it is common in the mouthes of our subuerted Profelires) that the auncient Fathers of the Church are all on their side. For this cause, sometimes in some speciall points of difference betwixt them and vs, I take it not to bee disallowable, if the Preacher for the taking away of that scruple out of the mindes of men, doe shew the consent of the elder Writers, that men may see it is but a vaine bragge which our aduersaries make, when they say that their religion is surable to the iudgement of the auncient Church: yet withall, I would not haue a man make this ordinarie. And besides, I holde it fit for him to admonish the people that it is done, not to derogate from the sufficiency of the Scripture, neither to tye them to the opinions of men, but onely to remouue that doubt, which by the whispering of wandring Papists, may arise in the mindes of those that are not so well settled

In Religion. Solikewise, for the speeches and sentences of prophane Authors, to barre them vterly out of Sermons, I dare not, because I finde them vsed by that worthy *Paul* three severall times: yet this I say, that as *Pauls* example warranteth, so it limiteth the vse of such testimonies, and sheweth that it must be done wisely and soberly, and that vpon two occasions chiefly: the one is, to conuince Atheists and irreligious persons, which esteeme not the Scripture, that they may be driuen to say, *We are pierced with our owne quils*, and by that meanes may be either converted or silenced. Another occasion is, by some other actions or speeches of theirs to shamer those that professe themselves Christians. I remember how God threatneth to prouoke the people of Israel with a foolish Nation: According as many times the Prophets to reforme the backwardnesse and slacknesse of the Iewes, preach to them of the forwardnesse and zeale that should bee in the Gentiles after their conversion. The same kinde of reasoning no doubt a Preacher may sometimes very profitably vse, by the morally good precepts and actions of the Heathen, to checke the carelesnesse of men professing Christianity. Thus, now and then I hold a man may rollerably alledge a sentence of a profane Writer, and a speech of a Heathen Author. As for the strangest manner of preaching which is in vse in many places, both in the Vniuersities and elsewhere, there is no man well affected, but if he knoweth it, he doth exceedingly pity it. One, as though the pulpit were but as a scaffold, in which he like a maister of Defence were to play his prizes, and to giue testimony of his wit, playeth vpon euery word, and descanteth vpon euery letter in his text, and as though the Scripture were but a rattle for Children and fooles to make sport withall, he tosseth it hither and thither, and will not faile to offer it any violence, to frame it to an imagined conceit, and to draw it to an idle purpose. Another, as if his purpose were onely to amaze the vulgar, and to affright and astonish the multitude, mounteth aloft, and is all in his great wordes, and new coyned phrases, more fit for some Mimick or Tragedian, then a Minister of the Gospell. A third, to gaine the opinion of a profound man, that looketh into matters of more depth then the common sort, rubbeth over the vnflauory writings of some Moath-eaten Fryer, and by an vnorth fashion of teaching, together with a multitude of Allegories and intricate distinctions, mazeth both himselfe and all those whose vnhappy chance it is to be his hearers. A fourth, to be reputed a good linguist and a man of great reading, fluffeth his Sermon with a legion of allegations, and enterlaceth it with many shreadings of Latine and Greeke, and by that meanes, though his doctrine perhaps may be profitable, yet he confoundeth the memory of the diligent and attentive hearer. Thus, while men being sicke of the Pharisaicall disease, *Love the praise of men more then the praise of God*, and preferre the ostentation of their owne supposed learning before the edification of Gods Church, the people is brought either into such an amazednesse, as they thinke that any thing may be made of the Scripture, or to such an vnserlednesse in iudgement, as that they do rather hunt after variety of teachers for their strange manner of preaching, then seeke for sound instruction for their own better edifying. Thus haue you my iudgement touching the vse of humane testimonies in the exercise of preaching.

Nymph. I willingly agree vnto you in that which you haue said touching some mens course of preaching: I haue sometimes my selfe bene at some mens Sermons which had the name of great Clarke and learned men, and yet (it may be mine owne dulnesse was the cause) such hath bene their manner of handling, so full of Schoole points and termes, and sayings of men, that neither hath my iudgement bene bettered, nor my conscience any whit comforted. But I do not yet see you how you will make the partes of your owne speech to agree: you say preaching must be learned and eloquent, and yet you are straine in allowing the vse of those things which may testifie learning, and garnish and

Actes 17. 28.
1 Cor 15. 33.
Titus 1. 12.
Prudenter &
sobrie zanch.
Propriis pen-
nis cōfigimur.
Theod. trip.
hist. 16. cap. 17

Deut. 32. 21.

Tanquam Ar-
chi & crepi-
tulum.

Scipula iungunt
Proicitam-
pulas & ses-
quipetalia
verba.

Iohn 12. 43

set forth your Sermons: for I tell you in the Countrey heere you are not thought learned, nor yet eloquent, so long as you speake nought but English, and withall common and ordinary wordes, and alledge nothing but places of Scripture, which euery man can search out of the Bible as well as you: I pray you therefore reconcile these two, how there shall be that plainnesse in your Sermons, and yet learning too.

How a sermon
may be plaine
& yet learned

us. *innotum.*

* Math. 23. 19
Non quid bene
sonet, sed
quid bene
intimet & in-
dicet quod
ostendere in-
tendit Aug.
de doct. ch. li.
4. cap. 9.
August. is full
to this purpose
de doct. chri.
lib. 4. cap. 8.

* 2 Cor. 4. 3.

Epaph. The matter is not what men thinke, but what men ought to thinke. It is possible for a man to be skillfull in the tongues, and yet to be farre enough off from being a learned man: and much reading, though it argueth industry, and may be a witnesse of a good memorie, yet it is no certain argument of sound iudgement. That man is most learned, who by his skill can make another man learned: for this is the end of preaching, to make men Schollers: and hee is most eloquent, that can make him who heareth him vnderstand that which he himselfe conceiueth. The intent of learning, is not that men that haue it should thereby breed astonishment in their hearers, and gaine admiration to themselves, but that by it they should be profitable and helpfull to those which are without it. So likewise, the vse of eloquence is not to bee as it were a mist before a mans speeches, to cause him to bee the more hardly vnderstood, but to giue lustre (as I may so speake) thereto, and to bring both light and delight to the dul apprehension of the hearers. And therefore whosoever so preacheth, as that because of the depth of his learning (as men call it) he passeth the capacity of the meanest hearer: againe, whosoever so speaketh, as that his eloquence (as men term it) maketh him to be as it were an Alient to his ordinary audience, surely the same is neither truly learned, nor truly eloquent, because his learning not conceiued profiteth not, and his eloquence not vnderstood benefits not. So that this being considered, that he is most learned whose preaching is most profitable, and he most eloquent, whose manner of speaking best entreteth into euery ordinary conceipt: it is an easie matter to reconcile these two, that our preaching must be learned, yet familiar: eloquent, and yet so plaine, that it may be truly said of it, that if it be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

Nymph. Yet it will be thought that preaching will grow into verie great contempt, and seeme but base in the eyes of wise Men, if choyse speaking and quaint wordes, which in other discourses are thought very commendable, shall bee banished from your Sermons.

* 1 Cor. 1. 21.

Epaph. Why man, did you neuer heare of this phrase, *The foolishnesse of preaching*? When the Gospell was first preached in the world, the reason why it had so cold intertainement was this: The Iewes, they would either haue it confirmed by some extraordinary signes, or else they would not credit it: (*The Iewes require a signe*.) The Gentiles being men of great learning, (as appeareth) they seeing Paul and the rest comming after a very meane fashion, men for their personage silly, for their profession making shew to know nothing but onlie Christ, and the same crucified, and for their course and carriage in the ministry, plaine, auoyding purposely the inticing wordes of mans wisdom, by and by scorned it, and deemed it folly to be caried away by a thing of that simplicitie: (*The Grecians seeke after wisdom*;) hereupon this Epithete was cast by the reprochfull world vpon the best kind of preaching, to call it *foolishnesse*, & all for this one cause, that as for the substance of it, it is crossing to mans reason, so for the fashion of it, according to the world, it is cleane out of fashion, only beautifull in this, because it is not beautified with that, without which the nice & giddy world thinketh euery thing to be deformed. So that the opinion of men reputing it to be but *foolishnesse*, because it wanteth that garish garnishing which mens itching eares are much delighted with, ought to bee no disparagement to it in the sight of those that are truly religious: and I pray God giue vs all grace that are called to the Ministry, to be so set for the glorie of God in the conuersion of soules, that

that wee may more affect soundnesse of teaching, then finenesse of speech, and may thinke it our best arte to secret arte, and to take heede of that bastard eloquence, which this worst age of the world, seeketh to make legitimate. It is a good aduice of *Ierome*, to auoid a pompous kinde of speaking in theologicall discourses: for a man (saith hee) that handleth holy matters, a lowe and (as it were) a foote oration is necessary, and not such as is thicken with artificiall framing of words. It is no matter, though the Papists continue to call vs in scorne Inke-Diuines, because of our close adhering to the holy Text, so long as the soules of Gods seruants shall receiue comfort by vs: for then I am right sure, this being sought for, the little flocke shall pray for vs, and the great shepheard shall be good to vs.

Nymph. You haue (at least to my understanding) well remooued this imputation of rude vnclearnednesse: I pray you therefore come to the next, which is that your manner of preaching is too austere: you haue nothing in your mouthes but hell and condemnation, and the iudgements of God, which (as some say) is the next way to bring men vnto despaire.

Epaph. I confesse indeed, that there is a great error committed by some, whose zeale doth sometimes so far over-cary them, that they forget the Apostles rule, of suffering the euill men patiently^a: and it may not vnfitly be said to many such, as Christ said to his disciples, when they would needes haue had leaue to command fire to come downe from heauen, to consume them that would not receiue him; they know not of what spirit they are^b. Yet notwithstanding, the conceipt of the most, who would haue nothing but peace preached to them, when as it may be truly said to the, as *Iehu* said to the seruant of *Iehoram*, What haue they to do with peace^c? is not at any hand to be giuen way vnto. It is meet for a Preacher to take heede, that he breake not the bruised reede, or quench the smoaking flaxe^d: so it is meete also to beware, how he taketh the childrens bread, and cast it to whelpes^e. The course warranted to vs by the Scripture, is this: first, to endeauour the softning of our hearers hearts, by bringing them to the light and sense of their owne wretchednes, before wee aduenture to apply the riches of Gods mercy in Christ Iesus. The preaching of the Gospel is compared by our Sauour himselfe vnto the sowing of seed^f: as therefore the ground is first torne vp with the plough, before the seede be committed to it; so the fallow grounds of our hearts must first bee broken vp with the sharpnes of the law, and the very terror of the Lord^h, before wee can be fit to entertaine the sweet seede of the Gospel. They who desire as liuely stonesⁱ to be made a spirituall house, euen the habitation of God by the spirit^k, must yeeld themselves to bee squared and hewne, and smoothed by the well applying of the law: that so they may become fit to be coupled together with the rest of the building, and to growe vnto an holy temple in the Lord^l. Wee must haue our monthes stopped by the law, and in our owne feeling stand culpable before God^m, and euen as it were concluded vnder sinneⁿ, before we can be admitted to think our selues to haue any, the least interest in the glad tidings^o of the Gospel. To preach mercy and grace vnto them, which feele no neede of mercy, & know not the worth of grace, is no better then to cast pearles before swine^p, and to expose the louing kindnesse of God vnto contempt. The person that is full, despiseth the hony comb, saith *Salomon* q: and what doth a proud Pharisee, or a churlish *Nabal*, or a scoffing *Ismael*, or a politique *Gallio*, care to heare of the bread, hand length, & depth, and height^r of the loue of God in his son Iesus? the doctrine of that nature, is as vnfitting such vncircumcised eares^s, as the snow the sommer, and the rain the haruest^t. Vnto the horse belongeth a whip, to the asse a bridle, and a rod to the fools back^u. So long as men will be like an horse, and a Mule which vnderstandeth not^x, & manifest their folly by haating knowledge^y, & by making a mock of sin^z, what other thing should they haue, but that which of right belongeth to the? let the soule be once humbled, and brought to hunger and thirst after righteousnes^a, & then a word in season^b, wil be as cold waters to a weary traveller, & as good newes from a far country^c: then wil mercy be as welcome

Non ornamē-
tated docu-
menta. Aug.
de do&tr. ,
Christ. 14. c.
19 magnæ est
artis celare
artem. Phale-
rac am oratio-
nem in theo-
logicis tracta-
tionibus: de
reb. sacris
tractanti pe-
destis oratio
necessaria est,
non quæ ver-
borum compo-
sitione fron-
deat. ad Da-
masum Atra-
mentales the-
olog. Eckius.

^a 2 Tim. 2. 24.
^b Luke 9. 54.
55.
^c 2 King 9. 18

^d Ifay 42. 3.
^e Math. 15. 26.

^f Math. 13.
^g Iere. 4. 4.
^h 2 Cor. 5. 11.
ⁱ 1 Pet. 2. 5.
^k Ephes. 2. 22.

^l Verse 21.
^m Rom. 3. 19.
ⁿ Gal. 3. 22.
^o Luke 2. 10.

^p Math. 7. 6.
^q Prou. 27. 7.
^r Ephes. 3. 18.

^s Acts 7. 51.
^t Prou. 26. 1.
^u Verse 3.
^x Plal. 32. 9.
^y Prou. 1. 22.
^z Prou. 14. 9.
^a Math. 5. 6.
^b Ifay. 50. 4.
^c Prou. 25. 25.
as

- as the raine upon the moorne grasse, and as the showers that water the earth^d. Besides, we finde it true by common experience, that the greatest part are so dead in sin, that if a Preacher should deale after some such milde fashion, as old *Eli* deale with his sonnes^e, his sermon will but be like a dreame when one awaketh: the hearer happely, when he is gone wil thinke he heard something, but he knoweth not what, & because he was reproofed but softly, he will imagine that he sinned but sleightly & so will let all slip as easily as it came gently. So that a man that intendeth to do any good in this frozen generation, he had neede to be rather Boanerges, one of the sonnes of thunder^f, then Bar-lonah^g, the sonne of a doue. In the Prophet *Jeremy* we reade that the word of the Lord is like an hammer^h: now if you adde that to it which *Salomon* saith, that the words of the wise are like nailesⁱ, it will follow thence, that he which is a wise master-builder in the Lords house, and a workeman that needeth not to be ashamed^k, whē he handleth this same hammer of the word, hee will be sure to driue the nailes of his exhortations to the head, that they may leaue some impression in the hearts of those which heare him. Well then, this is the substance of my opinion in this point: I would haue a preacher to preach peace, and to ayme at nothing more then the comfort of the soules of Gods people, yet I would haue him withall frame his course to the manner of Gods appearing to *Elijah*: The text saith, that first a mightie strong winde rent the mountaines, and brake the rockes: then, after that came an earth-quake, and after the earth-quake came fire: and after all these, then came a still & a soft voice^l. After the same manner, I would not haue the still & milde voyce of the Gospel come, till the strong tempest of the law hath rent the stony hearts of men, and haue made their bellies to tremble, and rottennes to enter into their bones^m, and to cry with that good king *Hezekiah* O Lord it hath oppressed me, comfort meⁿ: or at the least, because our auditories are mixt, consisting of men of diuers humors, it shall be good for him to deliuer his doctrine with that caution, that neither the humbled soules may be affrighted with the severity of Gods iudgemēts, nor the profane & vnrepentant, grow presumptuous by the abundance of Gods mercy.
- Nymph. *Indeepe I am verily perswaded, that this course which you haue named is the best: for to this best agree those properties of the word which the Apostle makes mention of, to wit, Sharpnesse & entring through, to the diuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, and discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart^o. But yet in the world this is a course that men like not of.*
- Epaph. No maruell: for (as I haue in part told you before in the beginning of our Conference) it is the greatest enemy vnto that which men loue best, and that is their owne sinne, vntill God be pleased to put a new spirit within mens bowels, and to take the stonie heart out of their bodies^p, there is nothing that they do hate more, then to be reformed^q. But the truth is, that though no reproofe for the present seemeth to be ioyous but grieuous^r, yet at the length, when men are better aduised, he that rebuketh shall finde more fauour, then hee which flattereth with his lips^s. Yea, & the time will come, that those who now cannot suffer wholesome doctrine^t, will curse the day, that euer they knew, or heard those sweete tongued^u chaplaines, and soothing *Zikkisabs*^x, which haue sowed pillowes vnder their armeholes^y, and haue caused them to erre by their flatteries^z: and they will also crie shame vpon those, whom they now thinke too cholericke and censorious, that they did not speake more thoroughly vnto them: therefore whatseuer mens acceptance is, it is best for vs to order the matter so, by speaking directly to the reproofe of sinne that we may be pure from the blood of all men^a; and that no man who liueth vnder our ministry may haue cause in the day of the Lord to impute his slownes in repēting to our too cold, too mild, & too couert maner of reproofing.
- Nymph. *But what say you now, sir, to the thurd accusation: which is, that you make your preaching too common, and so by that meanes draw it into contempt, and make it to be the lesse esteemed among men? I can tell you there bee many that are preachers them-selues be of that opinion.*
- Epaph.

^d Psal. 72. 6.^e 1 Sam. 2. 23.^f Mark. 3. 17.^g Math. 16. 17.^h Ier. 23. 29.ⁱ Eccl. 12. 11.^k 2. Tim. 2. 15.^l 1. Kin. 19. 11.^m Hab. 3. 16.ⁿ Isa. 38. 14.^o Heb. 4. 12.^p Ezech. 11. 19.^q Pl. 1. 50. 17.^r Heb. 12. 11.^s Prou. 28. 23.^t 2. Tim. 4. 3.^u Ier. 23. 31.^x 1. King. 22.^y Ezech. 13. 18.^z Ier. 23. 32.^a Act. 20. 26.

Epaph. I am the more sory: and to tell you what I thinke plainly, I am of that minde, that those which blame often preaching as a fault, what colour soever they may set vpon it, yet they do it chiefly for the couering of their own shame, that their negligence may not bee taken notice of. I remember the old fable of the Fox, who hauing had a mischance and lost his taile, coming into the assembly of the beasts of the same kind, fell to perswade them, every one to cut off his taile, pleading the cumberfomnesse and waightinesse of it, with many the like circumstances: but the matter coming to further scanning, it was found that the wily Fox did it only to couer his own deformity, which (if to be without tails had once bin a fashion) should neuer haue bin espied. I leaue you to apply it. Only I would with all such so minded, to follow *Hieromes* counsell, in which he admonished one *Calphurnius*, vpon some such occasion as this, that if hee wanted teeth himselfe, he should not be enuious against those which were able to eate. When one counselled *Moses* to silence *Eldad* and *Medad*, imagining that their *Propheying in the boast*, might haue eclipsed *Moses* his credit, *Moses* liked not the aduice, but wished that *all the Lords people were Prophets*^b. But lest I should seeme too tart against this kinde of men, (of whom yet there is some hope) I will bee content to examine their reasons, because (as I gather by your speech) they seek (as the Prouerb is) to be mad with reason.

Ne vescu-
dentibus,
dentulus in-
uideat. Epist.
84.

^b Num. 11. 27.
28, 29.
Cum ratione
insanire.

They say the ouer-commonnesse of preaching, will breede contempt of preaching. First of all, suppose it fareth with some, in respect of preaching, as it did with the vnthankfull Israelites^c, which loathed the Manna, wherewith the Lord so miraculously fed them in the wilderness, so they also seeme to be (as it were) glutted with the continuall vse of the word preached: yet this can bee no reason why a diligent and frequent Preacher should remit any thing of his former industry, and speake more sparingly, drawing his Sermons into a smaller number, then he was wont. It was a worthy speech of *Chrysostome*, that worthy and industrious Preacher: *Although* (saith he) *I am not ignorant, that I speake in vaine, yet I will not giue over; for in so doing I shall be excused with God, although none would heare me.* It is truly said, that there are three very good mothers, which haue three very bad daughters, and they are these: 1. Truth, which yet in the world breedeth hatred. 2. Peace, a great blessing of God, and yet through our corruption it causeth Idlenesse. 3. Familiaritie, and the common vse of a good thing, which is notwithstanding mostly recompenced with Contempt. And yet this is not in the nature of these things, but only in our corruption. For as the nature of God is so perfectly good, that he doth turne euen very euill things, into very good things, (as he made the malice of the Iewes, in putting his Son to death, to bee a meane of our saluation) so, our nature is so absolutely euill, that it turneth very good things into euill, as sometimes the grace of God into wantonnesse^d, & Christian liberty into an occasion vnto the flesh^e, and so in these particulars which I haue named. Now because truth is generally hated, shall men therefore banish it from their speeches, and frame their tongues to flattery? Because many abuse the blessing of peace, shall we therefore voluntarily raise tumults, or desire God to put an end to our happy daies of quietnesse? There is in the world no reason for it. Neither is there any iust cause, why we should go about to make our preaching as it were, something more dainty, because it may seeme, to some raw and ill disposed stomackes, to breede a kinde of fulnesse and satietie. Secondlie, if we looke better into it, wee shall see, that the true cause of mens contempt of preaching, is not so much the common vse of it, as the ignorance of the vvorth and excellency of it. The Sunne, the Water, the Fire, what things more common, and yet what things lesse despised? and the reason is, because we all know, we cannot liue without them. Let men be once perswaded of this, that neither the sun, nor water nor fire are more necessary for the outward man, then preaching is for the soule and spirit, and that where it is wanting, there the people

^c Numb. 11. 6.

Chry. in Cap.
3 Ioh.

^d Iude 4.

^e Gal. 5, 13.

dec. 17;

- ^f Prou. 29. 18. *decay*^f, then they will neuer be cloyed: or at least, if (society through the in-bred corruption of our nature creepe vpon them, by the remembrance hereof it will quickly be recovered. Thirdly, doe but marke, what course of preaching it is, which it pleaseth some to call ouer-common: namely, a settled course for euery Sabbath, and it may be some weeke-day Lecture, as it is called vsually. Now I would faine see, how any man can say with reason, that this is ouer often. *Paul* commaundeth to *preach in season*^g. If this charge cary any waight, what better season can there be, then the Sabbath, a day of leisure, a day in which men if not for conscience, yet for custome, and because of the lawes, assemble themselves in one place, for the performance of one common duty and seruice vnto God? I remember it is premitted as a circumstance to the historicall relation of some of Christs Sermons, that *when hee sawe the multitude, and great troupes resorted to him, then he spake many things to them*^h: and in another place it is said, that beholding the swarmes of people, and considering their spirituall wants, euen his very bowels did worke within him, and he began to teach themⁱ. So no doubt it is, and ought to bee with euery good Minister: hee cannot (as wee say) finde in his heart to dismitte a multitude assembled to worshippe God, without some word of exhortation. Mees thinketh, that when a Pastor of a Parish is comen into the Church vpon the Sabbath day, and beholdeth his whole flocke gathered together as one man, hee should euen imagine, that the very presence of the people doe call to him, (as the *Rulers of the Synagogue* did to *Paul* and *Barnabas*,) that if hee haue any word of exhortation for them, hee should say on^k. So that, if to preach in season, bee a Minister his duty, and the fulnesse of an assembly vpon the Sabbath bee a seasonable occasion, (as no man can denie it,) I cannot see how so seasonable an exercise, can bee charged with ouer-commonnesse, or blamed as a meanes to make the word of God lesse precious amongst men. God requirerh, that wee should call the Sabbath a delight to consecrate it^l: now, how can that day bee hallowed and consecrated as it ought, if so speciall a part of Gods spirituall worship, as preaching is, be left out? how must not the whole other seruice of the day, be euen as a lame and maymed sacrifice before God? I know indeed it pleaseth some to say, that the meeting of the people together to the hearing of the word preached (a phrase scoffed at, as though it were not the language of the Scripture^m,) is not the chiefe institution of the Lords day. But whatsoeuer mensidle conceipts be, yet the truth is, that the most excellent parts of Gods seruice, consisteth in the exercise of his word: the faithfull dispensing whereof is the beauty of the Lords house, and the very life of the Sabbath. The other parts of Gods publike worship, do but as it were waite and giue attendance vpon this. For wherefore is prayer, but to prepare vs to the word, and to begge of God to bestow those blessings which are promised in the word? And if we wil credit the Scripture, men cannot pray til by preaching they are taught to pray. *How shal they call on him, vpon whom they haue not beleueed*ⁿ? &c. The place is known well enough. Againe, what is the vse of the Sacraments, but to be seales to the word? The preaching of the word is the tenor of the covenant betwixt God and vs: the Sacraments are seales to assure vs of the performance of the gracious promises, made vnto vs in the word. So that indeed the other specialties of Gods worship, are of no vse, but only so farforth as they haue reference to the word. In the 2. of *Isaiah* his prophecy, where the state of the Church of the Gospel is described, the people are brought in, prouoking one another to ascend up to the mountaine of the Lord, to the house of the God of *Iacob*^o. To encourage themselves & other hereunto, they vse this reason, *he will teach vs his waies*: no doubt in their meetings they were to vse both praier & the Sacraments. But yet, that there they should be taught, was vsed as the principall motiue; because, as to be taught the waies of the Lord, is the principall blessing^p, so obediently, to heare is the principall seruice. Wherein *both the Lord so great pleasure*,

as in this, *when his voyce is obeyed*, and how can his voyce be obeyed till it is knowne? and what other ordinary meanes of knowledge shall we trust vnto besides preaching? Seeing then the Sabbath day is a fit time in regard of peoples assembling together, and seeing also the preaching and hearing of the word, is a maine part of the worship of God, and by consequence especially intended in the first institution of the Sabbath, he that endeauoureth to entertaine his people euery Lords day, with the opening and applying the Scriptures, cannot iustly be accused to bee one, who by too much familiarity draweth the ordinance of God into contempt. And if examples be of any force herein, they bee not wanting: of old *Moses was read and preached in the synagogues euery Sabbath day*. That which our Sauour did at Nazareth, is said to haue beene his custome. *Iustine Martyr* testifieth that the reading and opening of the Scriptures lasted ordinarily for an houre long euery Sabbath day. *Tertullian* reports, that in his daies (& they were neere the times of the Apostles, as were also *Iustine* martyrs) there was no publike meeting, in which before the dissoluing of it, they were not fed with holy sermons. *Augustine* saith of *Ambrose* that hee preached, euery Lords day. And I remember the speech of a reuerent Bishop of this land, namely that a Minister can no more enter into the Church vpon a Sabbath day without preaching and not be guilty of a damnable sin, then *Aaron* could enter at any time into the congregation without death, in case hee sounded not his bellies when he entred: and further, that he committeth the sin of a dumbe dogge, who passeth ouer a Sabbath without preaching, and in so doing causeth also the people to pollute the Sabbath day. You see examples, and iudgement in this case not to be despised.

⁹¹ Sam. 15. 22

^r Act. 15. 21.

^r Luk. 4. 16.

Sacris Scrimo-
nibus.
Omni die
dominico.
Babingtona

Nymph. Well, suppose it be yeilded vnto, that it be good to continue the exercise of Preaching euery Sabbath day, yet it may seeme superfluous to draw the people to hearing vpon the weeke dayes, when men are otherwise in their worldly affaires to bee employed.

Epaph. That is it which I was now next about to speake of: I cannot say it is a matter of necessity for a Minister to tie himselfe or his auditors, to a weekeday sermon: yet if a Preacher be willing so to bestow his paines, and the people, in respect of their dwelling together, as in cities and greater townes, bee ready to redeeme some time for so good a purpose, I hold it very commendable. When *Paul* and *Barnabas* preached at Antioch, we reade that the Gentiles besought them that they would preach those words to them, in the space betwixt that and the Sabbath day. Now though I will not say that that example is a Lawe, yet I must needs say it is an allowance to such a course: and that which was commendable in them, cannot deserue blame in others of Gods Children, who are willing to diuert some of their time allowed for outward businesses to spiritual occasions, as namely for the increasing of their knowledge, and for the edifying themselves in their most holy Faith. Neither can such a course be more an occasion of bringing preaching into contempt, then the established order for meeting on Wednesdaies and Fridaies to prayer and reading of the Scriptures, can bee or is an occasion to make these good exercises to be despised.

Of weekeday
Lecture.

^r Ephe. 5. 16.

^r Act. 13. 42.
εις το μεταξυ
σαββατου,
Intra proximē
sequens Sab-
batum.
εἰς το μεταξυ
Beza.
^r Iude 20.

Nymph. I haue heard some say that it is sound and learned preaching which we that are the people must wish for, and not often and continuall preaching: and that the word of God is compared to raine, which though it be in measure profitable, yet in abundance maketh the seede rotten vnder the clods. In like manner, they say that preaching in moderation may do much good, but if it exceede, may be an occasion of barrennesse among the hearers.

⁹¹ Joel. 1. 17.

Epaph. It is a woful thing, that men should so far stretch their wits to deceiue their owne soules, and to beguile others also. I would we had all learned the Apostles rule, not to doe any thing against the truth, but for the truth. To satisfie you

^x 2. Cor. 13. 8

touching this that you have named, having obserued it (as you say) out of the speches of some: it is worth the marking, how Satā in his subtilty vnder the colour of allowing & vrging sound preaching, wold ouerthrow diligent preaching: therein building vpon a false ground, namely, that a man cannot preach often & preach soundly too; which how false it is, the vnreprouable labours of many industrious Ministers in this land, are a sufficient witness. It is a wise and holy speech of Salomon, and may be well applyed to this purpose, *A slouthfull hand maketh poore, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich*: and againe, *There is that scattereth and is more increased, but he that spareth more than is right, surely commeth to paucity*. Men of excellent gifts many times, whilest, either in nicenesse, (feare to hurt their bodies) or in pride, (being as it were vnwilling to make themselves too common,) they are more sparing in this exercise of preaching (which is the glory of a Minister) through the iust iudgement of God loose their former perfection, & as through disuse they grow lesse willing, getting a kinde of habite of negligence, so also they become lesse able to do good in the Church of God then they were before. Now, when preaching (through default of often inuring themselves vnto it) becommeth more irksome, (they beeing to seeke in many things when they fall to make preparation for it,) then strait, because of their owne vnaptnes (the iust punishment of idleness) they conclude, that those who preach so often (as they call it) preach carelesly without study and without learning. On the other side, men (it may be) of meaner (yet commendable) gifts, who remembring the necessity which is laid vpon them, and the woe which shall follow, if they preach not the Gospel^a, doe euen deuote themselves and all their studies & endeaours to the seruice of the Church, and do so long after their people from the very heart roote in Iesus^b, that for their spirituall furtherance they could be teame to deale euen their owne soules^c vnto the: such I say, through the blessing of God vpon their holy labours, do so increase in iudgement and in zeale, and haue such a doore of utterance opened vnto them, to speake the myserie of Christ^d, that as they themselves, placing a kinde of felicity in the doing of their duty, finde in themselves a certaine faculty in that heavenly exercise, so the Church of God committed to them, is instructed by their soundnesse of doctrine, and whetted on by their zealous exhortations. So that to say, that sound preaching is for the peoples behoofe, & not frequent preaching, is a meere collusion, presupposing that which is most false, namely, that soundnesse of doctrine & oft-nesse of teaching cannot go together. How little I approue of rash aduenturing vpon this kinde of exercise, that which I haue spoken formerly may witness: and how small reason there is to separate these two, profitable preaching and often preaching, I referre it to any indifferent iudgement.

Nymph. But because some that are reputed learned, affirme that often preaching is not so much for the peoples profite: shew me I pray you some good reason to the contrarie, that I may be able both to preuaile against mine owne backwardnesse, when I begin to grow wearie of diligent hearing, and to prouoke others also, when I shall behold them as it were gluttied with multitude of sermons.

Epaph. There is a certaine disease which we are al more or lesse infected with: our Sauour Christ calleth it slownesse of heart^e: this euill sicknesse beeing accompanied with a kinde of spirituall sleepinesse and lethargy, maketh vs (as it were) a very lumpe of sluggishnesse, slow in attention, slow in vnderstanding, slow in remembring, slow in practising. First for attention, wee see it by every daies experience, how like the most of our hearers are vnto the idols of the heathen, of whom the Psalme saith that they haue eares and beare not^f. It is true that Elihu said to Iob, God speaketh once or twice, and one seeth it not^g: many excellent things are spoken which wee obserue not: we heare generally with the hearing of the eare^h, so that wee haue all neede to haue that of the Prophet often vrged, Hee that beareth, let him heareⁱ: that so wee might endeuour to fetch

^a Prou. 10. 4.

^z Chap. 11. 24

^a 1. Cor. 9. 16.

^b Phil. 1. 8.

^c 1. Theff. 2. 8.

^d Col. 4. 3.

^e Luk. 24. 25.
The necessi-
tie of often
preaching.

^f Psal. 115. 6.
^g Iob 33. 14.

^h Iob 42. 5.

ⁱ Ezech. 3. 27.

vp our hearts, to our eares, that one sound may at once pierce them both: this is our slownesse in attention: there is nothing that is heard more idly, then that which ought to be listened vnto most carefully. Secondly, for conceit and vnderstanding, our slownesse therein, equalleth our slothfulnesse in the former: many points are taught, and that with as much plainnesse as is possible, in which notwithstanding *he that speaketh* seemeth as it were a Barbarian vnto vs. That same naturall man which perceineth not the things of the Spirit of God, sometimes beareth too great a stroke within vs: sometimes also (God permitting it for our better humbling) the god of this world blindeth our mindes, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ cannot shine vnto vs. The blinde man whom Christ healed at Bethsaida, when his sight began in some degrees to be restored, being asked if he saw ought, hee looked vp and said, I see men walking as trees: he saw at the first not distinctly, but after a confused manner. I apply it thus: wee are all by nature blinde in the best things, and because they are spiritually discerned of our selues we cannot see them: now when it pleaseth God (which commandeth the light to shine out of darkenes) to shine in our hearts, we haue at the first but as it were a certaine glimpse of heauenly matters, the precise & exact knowledge is not by and by attained. Thirdly, touching memory, how great weaknes there is in it, I call euery mans conscience to witnesse. Indeed we see how surely and how long men can remember matters of the world. The vncharitable and malicious man will remember an euill turne many a yeare, waiting still an opportunity to reuenge it. The old man hath so fresh an impression of the toys & vanities of his youth, that he wil make you as perfit a relation of the with every circumstance, as if they had bin done but yester day. The covetous worldling, though perhaps he can neither write nor read, nor hath any to keep his reckonings, yet he can remember all his bargaines, all his conditions in bargaining, al his daies, houres, and places, either for the payment or receipt of any thing. The young man or woman can soone learn without book many a ballad or idle Loue-song, tending to the increasing or stirring vp of vncleannesse: and so it fareth in other particulars. But come now to matters of religion and piety, alas how true is it that the concept of them is as soone gone from our minds, as the sound from the eares? When David enquired of Abimeaz, comming frō the camp, touching Absalom, his answer was, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what. Like to this will be the answer of a great many, when at their returne from the house of God they are demanded touching the particulars there deliuered: they wil say, they saw a man speaking, and heard the noise of his voice, & beheld his gesture, but they know not what, they can tell little of that which was vttered by him. Lastly, for slownes in practise, it is long before, (after long hearing) we are brought to incline to a good duty, and yet after some good disposition to it, there are so many delays, and so many pul-backs, yea and after a reasonable beginning so many fallings back, and so much waxing weary of well doing, that we are too well like Salomons sluggard, who it may be maketh many offers of rising, yet whilst he cryeth, *Let a little sleepe, a little slumber*, the time stealeth away, and his vineyard is all growne ouer with thornes for want of husbandry. This is our drowfie sicknes of slownes of heart: The best ordinary remedy against this disease, is often preaching, as you shall see, if you well examine it. Continuall calling vpon, at last through a kind of importunity will win vs to attention. Often repetition of the same points will both cleare the vnderstanding, and settle the iudgement also. *It grieueth me not* (saith Paul) *to write the same things to you, and for you it is a sure thing*. That which after many times deliuerie is still committed to forgetfulnesse, yet at the last it is laid vp in the midst of the heart, and the negligence and backwardnes of many yeares, yet in the end (the words of the wise Preacher being like goads) is drawn vnto some comfortable perfection. If often preaching may lawfully bee complained of, who haue iuster cause to grone vnder the burden of it, then wee that

^a Isa. 58. 1.
Occidit mife-
ros crambe
repetita ma-
gistros.

^b 1. Cor. 9. 26.

^c Isa. 48. 4.

^d Jer. 20. 9.

^e 2. Tim. 4. 2.

^f Chap. 2. 25.

^g Math. 18. 22

^h Luke 5. 5.

ⁱ Math. 4. 19.

^j Luke 5. 5.

^k Math. 4. 19.

^l Luke 5. 5.

^m Math. 4. 19.

ⁿ Luke 5. 5.

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or seldome, and thinne preaching promised as a blessing. And surely, if, as a-
bundance of raine, so abundance of preaching were a punishment, I doubt
not but the good lawes of our Church, which haue prescribed a prayer against
ouer-much raine, might well set down the same course in respect of much prea-
ching: from which notwithstanding every honest mans eares would abhorre.
And therefore I will be bold to conclude, that this reason pressing the similitude
of raine & moysture to the washing away of diligent preaching & hearing from
out of Gods Church, is a very dry reason, which though it may appeare to haue
some taste of wit, yet hath scarcely any smak of honesty.

Nymph. I pray God therefore we may remember to make the prayer which our Sa-
nour taught vs, namely, that the Lord of the haruest should send forth labourers
into his haruest, & that he would so furnish them with gifts of knowledge, of utterance,
and of zeale, that they may urge and call upon vs continually: for (as you truly saide)
we are so slow and backward, that except we be daily pricked forward and roused up, we
shal grow cold and carelesse, and be euen frozen upon the dregs of our owne security. I
know Sir, that in good manners it is now high time to forbear troubling you any further,
yet I would gladly crane your direction in one thing more; and that is this: for mine owne
part I thank God, I both do, and euer (since I had any taste of goodnesse) haue loued
preaching, onely I finde a great defect in my selfe that I cannot so profite by it as I would,
and as I see many doe. I am bold therefore to intreate you to shew me how and by what
meanes I may heare profitably, both for the setting of my iudgement, and for the increase
of holinesse in my common conuersation. The humours of many men, are heerein very
strange: some say, that there are such differences of opinions among you that be learned,
that a common man knoweth not which of you to beleue: others hold an opinion, that it
is not for private ordinarie persons, to take upon them to argue or iudge of those things
they heare; so that the onely resolution of the greatest part is, that it is the safest and
wisest way, either not to heare, or else if for satisfying the lawes they must heare, yet not
to giue credite. Besides, there are many of vs which heare usually, and yet are little
bettered by it: their knowledge is but vaine iangling, and their conuersation not much
differing from the irreligious multitude: they are like the Fish in the Sea, which howbe-
it it liueth in the salt water, yet is without all taste of (saltnesse). So though they liue vn-
der a settled ministrie (which is the salt of the earth,) yet being tasted, wil be found
utterlie without any true seasoning. Now if it might be, I would be loath to bee in this
number: and therefore my last (though not my least) suite vnto you, is to affoord me your
best counsell in this case.

^f Math. 9.38.

^f 1. Tim. 1.6.

^u Math. 5. 13.

Epap. I must needs commend your good care in this matter: for indeed what-
soeuer men thinke, there is nothing so full of danger as is idle and vnprofitable
hearing. Those things which are in their own nature best, being ill vsed, become
most hurtfull. Hearing is the ordinance of God to draw vs vnto himselfe: but
being vsed carelesly and vnprofitably, it turneth to our greater condemnation:
and therefore you cannot be too carefull herein. It is true that men pretend ma-
ny things, whereby to shift off the diligence which is required in this behalfe:
but their pretences being examined, wil become lighter thē vanity it selfe. They
say, we that are Preachers cannot agree among our selues; that is not absolutely
true: for blessed be God, many of vs doe *proceede by one rule*, and doe *minde one
thing*. Besides, so long as we liue here in the world, our vnderstanding is mixed
with the darknesse of ignorance, and by reason thereof, there cannot chuse but
be differences of opinions in some things euen amongst the best. Take me three
or foure, or halfe a doozen, which are dim sighted, and cannot see without spe-
ctacles, if you set them to descric a thing a farre off, they will be of diuers and
contrarie opinions touching it: now Saint Paul saith, that in this life, wee doe
but see, *as in a Glasse darkly*: and therefore our iudgements in all things at all
times cannot be the same. Moreover, it pleaseth the Lord sometimes for their
punishment, which haue not receiued the love of the truth, and for the discouerie

^x Phil. 3. 16.

^y 1. Cor. 13. 12

^z 2. Thess. 2. 10

^a 1. Cor. 11. 19 of those which are approoved^a, to giue leaue vnto sathan to be a false spirit in the
^b 1. Kin. 22. 22. monthes of some^b, & to suffer them to come amongst vs in sheepes clothing, though
^c Math. 7. 15. inwardly they are rauening wolues^c. Now the possibility of being deceiued when
 we heare, ought rather to increase our care in hearing, then to be an occasion
 of vnwillingnesse to heare. This may be manifested by a plaine similitude: Sa-
 lomons exhorting vs to be carefull to obtaine the knowledge of Gods truth, deli-
^d Prou. 23. 23. uereth his exhortation in these words, *Buy the truth*^d: from this kinde of speech
 I reason thus: If a man wanting necessaries, as meat and rayment, and being ad-
 uised to furnish himselfe from the market, should make this answer: The world
 is so full of deceit, that a man knoweth not whom to trust, those which sell, ma-
 ny of them will not sticke to beguile their owne fathers, and the trickes & de-
 uises that trades-men haue are infinite, so that it is twenty to one but a man in
 chafering with them shall be beguiled: I had rather therefore goe neare the
 winde, and want necessarie prouision, then put it to the aduventure of buying; If
 I say, a man should pleade thus, what would we think of him, but that either he
 were very foolish or very froward? And indeed we might well so esteeme him,
 because we know, that the fraud of others must bee preuented rather with care
 and circumspection, and not vsed as an occasion of abridging a mans selfe of
 necessaries. Is not he then as much as a foole, who wanting the sauing know-
 ledge of the truth, and being called vpon to repaire vnto the house of God,
 (which is as it were the Lords market, in which the hid treasures of wisdom
 and knowledge are laid open to the view & offered freely to the vse of all men)
 shall esloones plead the deceiueablenesse of false doctrine, the corruption of
 many Preachers, the shew of some contrarieties among them? Yes verily, for is
 he to deprive himselfe of the necessary foode of his soule, because it may be for
 lack of care, that in stead of hoping to be fed, he may be poysoned? Nay rather,
 he is to become the more wary, the more diligent in prayer, the more exercised
 in the Scripture, that whē he cometh to buy the truth he may not be deceiued.

Nymph. Truly you say well: onely it seemeth you build vpon a false ground (at least
 in the opinion of some,) namely, that we which are priuate men, may iudge of that which
 we heare, and examine it whether it be the truth or no: I desire therefore that you would
 proue that point well vnto me.

Epaph. Indeed it is the opinion of Poperie, that it is not for euery particular
 person of himselfe, to examine, trie or iudge, which is true or false doctrine, who
 is a true or false doctor: and it is a principle in that Church, that it sufficeth a
 common man to giue his consent to the Church and to beleue as the Pastors
 beleue. But all the true Ministers of Iesus Christ are of another iudgement:
 for howsoeuer we doe vrge all reuerent respect to the preaching of the word, as
 to the ordinance of God, yet we take not vpō vs to haue dominion ouer the faith^e
 of our hearers, as though we would binde them to giue credite to euery thing
 we speake, by the authoritie of our name (as Ambrose his words are) therefore
 because we speake it. And in truth there is nothing more manifest in Scripture
 then this, that the people ought iudicially to examine the doctrine taught, be-
 fore they dare to entertaine it. Paul to the Galathians saith thus, *Though wee or
 an Angell from heauen, preach vnto you otherwise then that which we haue preached
 vnto you, let him be accursed*^f. Now if he which preacheth contrarie to the reuea-
 led truth bee accursed, surely the case of him which giueth credit to him must
 needs be dangerous: and therefore for the auoydance of the danger, it is meete
 for enery man to be fully perswaded in his owne minde^g, that hee may discern things
 that differ one from another^h. The Thessalonians are willed to trie all thingsⁱ
 those to whom Saint Iohn wrote, are counselled to trie the spirits^k. Salomon hath
 branded him for a foole, who will beleue enery thing^l. It is a disgrace for men
 professing religion to bee like children carried with euery winde of doctrine^m. It
 is an honour to be like the gentlemen of Berea, who searched the Scriptures
 daily,

Rhem. Testa.
 vpō 1. Ioh. 4. 1
 Priuate men
 may & ought
 to iudge of
 that which
 they heare.
^e 2 Cor. 1. 24.
 Ambros. In 1.
 Thess. cap. 5.

^f Gal. 1. 8.

^g Rom. 14. 5.
^h Phil. 1. 10.
ⁱ 1. Thess. 5. 21
^k 1. Ioh. 4. 1.
^l Prou. 14. 15.
^m Eph. 4. 14.

daily whether those things which the Apostle taught were so. Christ saith, that his sheep know his voice, and will not follow a stranger. What can be more expresse then these testimonies? Let any man consider the places and the parties to whome these commaundements of taking triall of the doctrine were directed, and hee shall finde that no one man is exempted from this duty of examining.

^a Acts 1. 11.
^b Ioh. 10. 45.

Nymph. Indeed me thinketh it standeth with some reason that wee should trie the doctrine which we heare, before we credit it: for otherwise we may soone be drawne into many errors: we haue a proverbe, that a man must tell money euen after his own father, not in distrustfulnesse, as though we thought hee would deceiue, but in wisdom, because unwittingly hee may be deceiued. No doubt we ought to bee much more circumspect in matters of doctrine, because euen the best that teach, in that they are men, may erre, and because also in matters of that nature, to be deceiued, is so exceeding dangerous. But all the matter is, how to iudge, and by what meanes to bee able to know truth from falsehood, wholesome from unwholesome doctrine.

A similitude like to this, in the same case Chrylo vseth hom. 13 vpon 2. Cor.

Epaph. Know this therefore for a truth, that in all cases and controuersies of religion, the Scripture onely must be admitted as vmpire, and euery thing must stand or fall at the determining thereof: for therefore hath the Lord commaunded it to be written, and to be made common to all, that by it all controuersies might be decided, all doubts resolved, all heresies confuted, all truth confirmed, euery conscience guided, euery mans life framed. Nothing is found that is disagreeing from it, nothing vsound that is consonant thereunto. Wee are well content to let that absurdity dwell with the parents of it, the Papists: namely, that the Scripture is rather to bee tearmed an admonisher, then a Iudge: let it be their glory, to thinke basely of the written word, and to ascribe the authority of iudging to vnwritten verities and traditions, rather then to it; we haue learned that the Law which is come forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord that hath issued from Ierusalem, must be Iudge among the nations: and we are commaunded to appeale still to the law, and to the testimony, assuring our selues, that there is no light in them, which speake not according to this word. We finde that our Sauiour himselfe stood to the iudgement and triall of the Scripture. Paul submitted his doctrine to the same rule. Wee reade the learned in former ages to giue the priuiledge of iudging onely to the Scripture. Augustine disputing with a chiefe Arrian, saith thus: Let vs dispute by the authority of the Scriptures, which are indifferent witnesses to vs both. And in another place: The Epistles of Bishops giue place one vnto another, and Councils are mended one by another, but the canonick Scripture, that is the rule of all, and must correct all. Basil the Great demaundeth that against all Heretiques the Scripture onely bee the vmpire. Cyprian saith, that the rules of all doctrines haue flowen from the Scripture. Chrysostome willeth his hearers to fetch all things from the Scripture. But what should we stand vpon the testimonies of men, when the fore-alledged places out of the written text are so apparent? Therefore to prepare you to the trying of the doctrines which you heare, holde this firme ground, that all points must receiue their allowance from the Scripture.

The Scripture the onely iudge of Doctrine.

Commonitorium non regula. Bellar. Lind lib. 1. Panop. cap. 9. P Isay 2. 34.

⁹ Isay 8. 20.
^r Iohn 5. 39.

^c Acts 17. 2. cap 28. 23. | Aug. contra Max. Arrian. lib. 3. cap. 14. Lib. de Pastor Bas Epist. 8. Cyprian in ser. de Bapt. Chr. Chryso. Hom. 13 in 2 Cor. παρὰ τὴν γραφὴν, πάντα μὴ διαγινώσκοντες.

Nymph. I could easily agree to you in this that you haue said, but that there is this difficulty therein, namely, how to make vse of the Scripture, and to apply it to this worthy purpose of finding out the truth thereby. You that are schollers, and haue the helpes of learning, and of the Artes and tongues, may make better shift in these cases, then wee plaine men of the countrey can. There is no man that preacheth, but hee alleadgeth the Scripture, and so carrieth it, that it may seeme to be absolutely for him, in that which he auoucheth: so that vnlesse we be taught how to iudge by the Scripture, we shall still bee in suspence.

Epaph. You haue made a very needfull motion; and therefore, if you will listen to it, I wil acquaint you with that course whereof my selfe both in my priuate studies, and in hearing others publicly, haue had very comfortable experience.

How to make vse of the Scripture for the trying of the truth.

rience. First of all, when you haue occasion and opportunity to heare, you must
 remember *Salomons* aduice, to take heed to your foote^c, and to vse some preparati-
 on before-hand, praying the Lord to open your eyes, that you may see the wonders of
 his law^a, and that his Spirit of truth may be with you, to leade you into all truth^x.
 Secondly, you must labour by all meanes, to subdue and suppress the seeming
 wisdom of your own heart, resolving to yeeld vp your selfe to whatsoeuer the
 Lord reueales, though it bee altogether crossing to your owne reason, and dis-
 pleasing to nature. For as *God resisteth the proud*, and maketh them which pro-
 fesse themselves wise, to become fooles^z: so hee will guide the meeke in iudgement, and
 teach the humble his way, and reueale his secrets to them that feare him^z. Thirdly,
 when you haue thus framed and fitted your selfe by prayer and humility, bee
 sure to remember this rule especially; namely, that that doctrine is the truest,
 which makes most for Gods glory, most for the comfort and reliefe of a wound-
 ed conscience, most for the restraining and curbing of our corrupt nature, and
 fleshly affections. Marke a little, and I will shew you the reason of this rule.
 First of all, the end why God made all things, was the glorie of his own name^b:
 the thing especially aimed at by him, in that great and admirable worke, (the re-
 demption of mankind,) & in all the particulars of it, even from the first foun-
 dation of it, his eternall election, vnto the last ende hereof, our glorification in
 heauen, is: That no flesh might glorie in his presence, but that hee that glorieth, might
 glorie in the Lord^c. This being then the maine end of all Gods courses, to keepe
 the glorie of all things entire vnto himselfe, it must needs be, that that doctrine
 is the most sound, which doth not admit the least impeachment of Gods glory.
 Secondly, one chiefe end of the Scripture is, as to beate downe man, and cleane
 to strip him of all goodnes and inclination thereunto, for the keeping of Gods
 glorie whole vnto himselfe, so also to put gladnesse into all distressed hearts, and
 to bring the ioy of saluation^d to all afflicted spirits. *David* saith it is one proper-
 tie of the word of God to reioyce the heart^e: And *Paul* affirmeth, that the drift
 of all the Scripture is, that wee through patience and comfort thereof, might haue
 hope^f. So that, looke what doctrine bringeth the fullest comfort to a poore
 soule, when it is cued at the depth of sorrow, that must needs be wholesome do-
 ctrine, seeing it concurrerh with the whole scope of the Scripture. Thirdly, one
 thing principally intended in the discouery of that grace of God which bringeth
 saluation vnto all men, was, that vngodlinesse and worldly lusts should be denyed^g, that
 the flesh, with the affections and lusts, should be crucified^h, that the body of sinne should
 bee destroyedⁱ, and that mortifying our members which are on the earth^k, wee should
 serue the Lord all the daies of our life in holinesse and righteousness before him^l. And
 therefore that doctrine which presseth vpon men, the most precise and strict o-
 bedience to Gods will, not giuing any the least toleration to any the smallest
 sinne, but still bridling mans naturall inclination vnto euill, that is the truth of
 God which euery seruant of God ought to entertaine. Tell mee now, vnder-
 stand you this direction?

Nymph. Yea truly, I doe in some measure vnderstand it; yet if you shall please by
 one or two examples to shew the vse of it, I shall the better perceiue it, and knowe the ra-
 ther how, and after what sort to apply it.

Epaph. I will not sticke with you for that: because I am very willing to sa-
 tisfie you in this matter. For the first branch therefore touching the glorie of
 God, take this example: Wee teach at this day, that faith onely iustificieth: our
 meaning is, that the very thing which maketh a man stand righteous before
 God, and to be accepted to life euermore, is, the imputed righteousness of
 Christ Iesus: which righteousness is appropriated and applyed to vs onely by
 faith. Others (as the Papists) say, that to the iustifying of a sinner before God,
 two things are required, remission of sinnes, and the habit of inward righteous-
 nesse, that is to say, charity with the fruites thereof. So that wee exclude, they
 establish

^a Eccles. 4. 17.

^b Psal. 119. 18.

^c Ioh. 16. 13.

^d 1. Pet. 5. 5.

^e Rom. 1. 22.

^f Pl. 25. 9. 14.

^g Prou. 16. 4.

^h 1. Cor. 1. 29.

ⁱ 1. Cor. 1. 29.

^j 1. Cor. 1. 29.

^k Psal. 51. 12.

^l Psal. 19. 8.

^m Rom. 15. 4.

ⁿ Tit. 2. 11, 12.

^o Galat. 5. 24.

^p Rom. 6. 6.

^q Coloss. 3. 5.

^r Luk. 1. 74-75.

Bellarmin, de

Iustific. 2. c. 7.

nesse, that is to say, charity with the fruites thereof. So that wee exclude, they establish the merit of mans workes. Well then, in this difference of opinion, there beeing learned men on both sides, and Scripture alleadged on both sides, you desire to know which is the truth: bring them both to the touchstone, and see which of the two maketh most for the glory of God; and the matter will soone bee answered, the doubt will quickly bee cleared. Consider therefore how euen the Apostle *Paul* by this rule decideth this controuersie: *By what law* (saith hee,) that is, by what meanes of saluation, *is boasting excluded*? Not by the law of workes, but by the law of faith. Hereupon he concludeth, *therefore a man is iustified by faith, without the workes of the Law*. ^{m Rom. 3. 27.} And indeed the reason is excellent: for if man could by any of his owne doings, further his owne saluation, or procure the encrease of glory in heauen, hee had then some matter of glorying, and might (as it were) account himselfe the lesse beholden vnto God. But iustification by faith onely, taketh all vnterly from man, and ascribeth his whole saluation, the beginning, middle, and ending vnto the Lord: so haue you both an example of this rule, and warrant for it, beeing vsed by the Apostle to decide so great a controuersie: and I am sure that you shall finde it of very great vse in many maine points of our religion. Secondly, for the second braunch of the rule, which is about the comfort and reliefe of a distressed and distracted conscience; marke this particular for the manifestation of the force of the rule. It is taught and maintained in our Church, that a Christian man may be vnfallibly certaine of his saluation in his owne conscience in this life, and that by an ordinary and speciall faith. Others there are (both Papists, and some also amongst our selues) which holde that the certainty of saluation, which in this life can be attained to, is onely coniecturall & probable, grounded onely vpon likelihoods: and this certainty they confesse to be vncertaine, and such as many times doth deceiue. Beholde, here is a great controuersie, and much is said on either side: now you that are a private man, would gladly know to which part you may safely encline, and what to rest vpon as the alone truth in this case. My aduice is therefore, that for your full satisfaction herein, you scan the matter by this rule: suppose a spirit deeply wounded, a conscience set as it were vpon the racke, seeing nothing in God but Iustice and Maiesty, and a consuming fire; finding nothing in it selfe but sinne and corruption, and infinite matter of despaire, so that by this meanes it is brought to such an exigent, that it knoweth not which way to turne, but is euen ready to cry out with *Paul*, *Who shall deliuer me*? ^{n Rom. 7. 24.} Enquire now which of those two doctrines doth afford the best comfort in this wofull case, that will quickly appeare: for the one holdeth the conscience in a continuall suspence, the other laboureth to settle it in the firme assurance of Gods vnchangeable loue in Christ Iesus: the one bringeth a plaister, but much too litle for the sore; telleth of the riches of Gods mercy, of the depth of his loue, of the vnsearchable sufficiencie of Christs merit, but yet denyeth the soule to be assured of a particular interest into it, & by that meanes rather increaseth then releueth the anguish: the other applyeth the medicine to euery part of the wound, sheweth Christ, discovereth the riches of Christ, and putteth the amazed heart into a full, assured, and comfortable possession of Christ. So that whatsoeuer shall bee argued to the contrary, you may be bolde to build vpon that which bringeth the most ioyfull and welcome tidings to an affrighted conscience: that is best agreeing to the scope of the Scripture, that cometh neere to the nature of the Gospel. Come now to the third branch, which is concerning the liberty of the flesh, and let me giue an instance of that also. There is at this day a doctrine, (almost openly taught, or at least tolerated by many that should teach otherwise,) namely, that a man may do well enough, without so much preaching: that it is not a matter of that great necessity to frequent the places of Gods publike seruice, but that a bodie

may

- may do well enough at home, with some private deuotions: that common men need not trouble themselves greatly with the Scripture, or with knowledge in religion: that the religious spending of the Sabbath is a thing indifferent: that often communicating at the Lords table, is not of any great importance, but that once or twice in a yeare is as good as euery day: that it is not good to be too forward in matters of religion, ouer-strait in conuersation: that God will beare with many small matters, &c. On the other side, there is a doctrine that telleth vs and prooueth vnto vs, that if wee desire to walke and to liue so as may please God, and as becommeth Christians, we must make conscience of often hearing the word, we must *as new borne babes desire the sincere milke thereof, that wee may grow thereby*, neuer contenting our selues with any measure of knowledge: we must strue and straine our selues, though sometime it be with some trouble and diseasing of our bodies, to come to the places of Gods worship, and *to giue attendance at the postes of the doores* of the Lords house: we must call the Sabbath *a delight to consecrate it*, resting not onely from labour, but from all things that may disable vs, and make vs more vnfit for Gods seruice, either in respect of preparation before it, or of conference and meditation after it: we must for the strengthening of our faith, and the solemn remembring of the death of Christ often communicate: we must in our liues walke circumspectly, with zeale and courage, and opennesse in the practise of religion: we must make conscience of the smallest sinne, and neuer thinke we haue done enough in the duties of holy obedience. Here is againe a new question, and you perhaps in some of these particulars, through the diuersity of opinions, may be vnresolved. If you demand of me, how you may be stablished, I referre you to this rule; search and consider which of the two tendeth most directly to the yoking, and hampering, and restraining of mans naturall disposition: that will soone appeare if you looke out into the world, and hearken how these doctrines are entertained: for the former, who so shall teach it, or seeme to approoue it, no doubt that man shall haue many followers and many fauourers: for doth not euery man almost like it, and wish it, that there should be lesse preaching? that it should bee free to spend the Sabbath, euery one as himselfe listeth? to receiue the Communion when men thinke good? to neglect knowledge? to banish the Bible out of their houses, or else to let it lie like olde harnesse rusting for lacke of occupying? will it not by and by be receiued, that it is not good for men to be precise, to be ouer scrupulous, to stand too nicely vpon points? Surely, he that should teach this, I might say of him as the Prophet spake of olde, *He were a Preacher for the people*. But now for the other doctrine, see what an acceptation it hath in the world: sic vpon it wil one say, what a tedious thing is this to heare so many Sermons, what a trouble to come so often to the Church, what a misery to bee restrained from our sunday sports, what a dull time will it bee, and how long will the day seeme, if thus we be limited? what neede so many communions? what should men be so hot and earnest in religion? if this once take place, farewell all mirth, farewell all good company, adiew to all thriuing, if this bee hearkened vnto. This is, and will be the entertainment of this doctrine: it will bee reputed as the Prophets Sermons were of olde, *even the burden of the Lord*. So by the generall yeelding or gaine-saying of the multitude, it may soone appeare which of the two is the greatest enemy to the flesh: and therefore you both may and must conclude with the latter doctrine, that this is from aboue, because it meeteth with our corruption at euery turne, and is still beating it downe, labouring to keep it within compasse. And by this rule (to gaine it the more credit) Paul tooke vp the question among the Galathians, touching the vse of Christian liberty, setting it downe for a ground: that it is then best vsed when it is not *vsed as an occasion to the flesh*, but with a holy respect to become seruants each to other by loue. Thus I haue (for your better vnderstanding) giuen you an example
- 1. Pet. 2. 2.
- † Prou. 8. 33.
- † Ilay 58. 13.
- † Mich. 2. 11.
- † Ier. 23. 33.
- † Galat. 5. 23.

ple of every branch of this rule, that you may know how to apply it; assuring you out of mine owne poore experience, that there are very few of the fundamentall points of religion, which directly concerne the worship of God, or our conuersation with men, but they may receiue their triall by this Canon, & may truly be said to stand or fall, according to the iudgement and verdict thereof.

Nymph. I thanke you vnfaignedly for this direction; yet touching this latter branch it seemeth to mee that there may be some doubt made, because the Popish religion is thought to restraine and punish the flesh more then ours: for it imposeth many very straight things, and vnpleasing, as fasting, penance, going barefoete, pilgrimage, payings of money, to purchase prayers when men are dead, and diuers the like: I pray you therefore cleare me this onely doubt, and then I am satisfied.

Epaph. I say in one word of all these, as Paul did of things very like, They haue indeed a shew of wisdom in voluntary religion, and humblenesse of mind, and in not sparing the body: but yet another way they giue greater liberty: for when it is taught that these things are meritorious, and of worth to do away many sinnes, what will not a man be content to doe, for a weeke or an houre, or a short time, for the remeouing of the sinnes of his whole life? and who will not be content when he is dying, to giue all that away which he must needes leaue behinde, for the deliuey of his soule from a supposed purgatory? Who would not goe an hundred miles on pilgrimage to the shrine of such or such a saint, to bee assured that it shall be his discharge for the remainder of his life? So that though these bodily impositions may seeme something straight one way, yet they giue treble liberty another way, and therefore may truly be said, rather to be an occasion to the flesh, then to limit the corruption of the flesh. Coloss. 2. 23.

Nymph. It is very true, for what will a man feare to do, so long as he is taught, and by teaching perswaded, that by almes-deedes and fasting (falsly so called) and some legacies bequeathed to religious vses (as they teare me them,) or by conformity to the penall impositions of a Priest, he may make sufficient satisfaction? therefore I holde this for answer enough to that objection.

Epaph. Well neighbour, to let that passe, and to follow the motion which you made, I must to the former rule adde one thing, which is this: Take heede by all meanes of such eares as the Apostle calleth *itching eares*, and of delighting to get an heape of teachers. It is a dangerous humour to affect variety of instructors, and it must needes cause distraction: it fills mens heads with a world of idle questions, and draweth them into vaine iangling. It is Satans policie as long as hee can to holde men in ignorance, and in the contempt or neglect of knowledge: when he cannot preuaile that way, but men will listen to instruction, then he will endeavour to busie them with profane fables, and vaine bablings, which breede questions, rather then that godly edifying which is by faith: that so hee may withdrawe their thoughts, and steale away their hearts from those things which ought principally to be looked vnto. Especially remember the aduice of Paul to his sonne Timothy; Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and art perswaded thereof, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. Note the place. The Apostle presseth a stiffe and firme continuance in truths received, when as these two things concurre therewith; a mans owne perswasion; and the consideration of those which first taught vs. First, for a mans own perswasion, I pray you to obserue it, lest I should seeme instead of grounded settlednesse, to commend selfe-willed peeuisshnesse. By being perswaded, Paul meaneth thus much, as if he had said to Timothy, If it be an opinion which thou hast not sodainly entertained, but upon good aduice, if it hath seated it selfe in thy iudgement, then, when as thou with care and conscience, with humility, with vsing the ordinary meanes, with prayer vnto God, with hearty desire to be guided in the truth, hast enquired after knowledge, surely thou oughtest not, beeing by these degrees brought vnto it, and in this manner perswaded in it, rashly and sodainly to forgoe it. This is that which is meant by perswasion in

² 2. Tim. 4. 3.

⁷ 1. Tim. 1. 6.

² 1. Tim. 1. 4.
Chap. 6. 20.

² 2. Tim. 3. 14.

in this place. A settlednesse of iudgement, following vpon an orderly course to bring a man thereunto. The second thing that must concurre, is the consideration of the parties of whome wee haue learned: as if Paul had said, *Obserue and marke well what kinde of men they are, by whose Ministry thou hast beene instructed; if they be men, who by their fidelity in teaching, and by the blessing of God vpon their labours, in vsing their Ministry to conuert mens soules, doe cary with them the seale of their Ministry; nay if thine owne conscience can witness for them either of these out of thine owne feeling, then beware of a contrary doctrine: though I would not haue thee tie thy selfe to any mans authority, yet bee well aduised before thou alter thy iudgement confirmed by such a Ministry.* This was Pauls meaning: and if you care to follow it, you shall in experience finde it good counsell. Thus I haue acquainted you with the best course I know as yet, both for the first informing, and the after-setting of your iudgement in Gods truth.

Nymph. I pray God to enable me by his holy Spirit, both to remember, and to practise this your good aduice, I will now make this onely request: you know it is not enough for one to be a man of knowledge, vntill he doe with knowledge ioyne obedience. If you know those things (*saith our Saviour,*) blessed are ye if you doe them ^b. Wherefore as you haue taught me how to heare profitably for the gaining of knowledge, so I pray you direct me how I may make good vse of hearing for the government of my life.

How to draw
things heard
into practise.

Epaph. In the first place therefore remember, as to pray to bee guided into all truth, by the Spirit of truth, so to beg of God to direct the Preachers tongue, that hee may speake vnto your conscience, and that his Sermons may bee as a glasse, in which you may beholde the very true estate of your owne soule. Secondly, labour to put away from you that which Salomon calls a *froward heart*^c, that is, a heart that cannot beare reproofe: remember it well, and thinke seriously vpon it, that there can bee no greater testimony of true wisdom then to *loue him that rebuketh you*^d: and thereupon resolute with your selfe before-hand, that whatsoever is spoken against your sinne, bee it neuer so tart or vnpleasing, yet you will receiue it with all meeknesse^e, and esteeme it as a *precious oyle*^f. Thirdly, in hearing, endeavour when the Preacher hauing laid the grounds of his doctrine, cometh to application, to obserue what is spoken by way of exhorting, what by way of reproofe, what with an intent to minister comfort: each point being referred to these heads, shall much the better be remembered. Fourthly, when you are departed from the Sermon, forget not to finde a time as soone as is possible, whilst things heard are most fresh, in which to *commune with your own heart*^g, and to ponder^h, and scanne, and search diligently those things which were deliuered. This is that which wee call meditation, an exercise which David exceedingly delighted inⁱ: it is the same to the minde, that digestion is to the bodie: that which we heare is by it made our own, so that the soule receiueth nourishment thereby. Now in the practise of this dutie, it is good to consider what things are presentlie necessarie, and what otherwise. Those things which are of present vse, are eftsouenes to be laid hold vpon, and a certaine secret oath is to be made betwene God and mans owne soule^k, to *make hast, and not to delay*^l, a speedie & diligent execution: yea though the dutie enioyned, be both in shew painfull, and an enemy to worldlie profite, an abridger of carnall delight, & a means by all likelihood to darken estimation and credit amongst men. If it be a matter of spirituall consolation, or of prouocation and encouragement to persist in a good dutie, it must bee reputed as a chearing from heaven, and heart (as wee say) to bee taken thereby against all, either inward assaults, or outward discouragements whatsoever. As for other points, which may seeme not to bee of so present vse, they are not to bee neglected, but to bee *bidden*^m and *kept in the midst of the heart*ⁿ, that they may not be to seeke when the Lord shall offer occasion to employ them. You must doe in this case as you doe in household matters: if you finde an implemēt which you know not how forthwith to bestowe, you wil

^b Iohn 13. 17.

^c Prou. 17. 20.

^d Prou. 9. 8.

^e Iames 1. 21.

^f Psal. 141. 5.

^g Psal. 77. 6.

^h Luk. 2. 19.

ⁱ Psal. 119. 97.

^k Psal. 119. 106

^l Verse 60.

^m Psal. 119. 11

ⁿ Prou. 4. 21.

will bee no charge to keepe it, once in seauen yeares it may serue for a purpose, for the which you would bee loth to lacke it: so though somethings which you heare, are not (as may seeme) presently needfull, yet you must make conscience safely to preserve them, because a time of vse may come hereafter, in which, as it would be a griefe to want direction, so the Lord (it may be) may then in iustice deny that, which formerly being offered, was entertained with contempt. In a word, looke to it that you be well furnished for all occasions, and know it to bee the chiefe duty, and the especiall marke of a good Christian, *to take heed* ^{o 2 Pet. 1. 19.}, and alwaies to *haue respect* ^{p Psal. 119. 6.} vnto the holy directions, which are soundly deliuered from Gods word: so shall you become *wise vnto saluation, and perfect vnto all good workes* ^{q 2. Tim 3. 15.}. This is the shortest and most familiar direction that I can giue you, for the religious gouernment of your life by the *forme of doctrine* ^{17.}, which in the ordinary Ministry of the word shall be deliuered vnto you. Larger directions the many good bookes which good men haue written of that matter, will plentifully affoord you. This may serue at this time, and it may be God will offer vs an occasion to talke of this matter more at large hereafter.

Nymph. I hope so too: and I shall for my part be ready to take any opportunity, being encouraged both by this your kindnesse, and by the benefite and comfort, which I must needs confesse I haue receiued by this present conference. For this time therefore I commit you to God, whome I heartily beseech so to blesse your labours in the Ministry, that you may turne many to righteousnesse, and may take that heed vnto your selfe, and vnto learning, that you may both saue your selfe and them that heare you. ^{f Dan. 12. 3.}

Epaph. I thanke you for your good prayer: I doe also desire the same God for his Sonne Christs sake, to giue you that good vnderstanding in all things ^{t 1. Tim 4. 16.}, that you may be fulfilled with the knowledge of his will, and that he would also strengthen you with all might through his glorious power, that you may be fruitfull in all good workes ^{u 2. Tim 2. 7.}, and may keepe the profession of your hope without waivering to the end. And so ^{x Col. 1. 9, 10, 11.} God be with you. ^{y Heb. 10. 23.}

To him be glorie for euer, of whom, and through whom, and for whom are all things.
Rom. 11. 36.